AN EXPLORATION OF LABOUR PARTY POLICY AND DEBATES ON NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OWNERSHIP FROM 1972-2002, WITH REGARD TO MODELS FOR ACHIEVING PLURALISTIC AND DEMOCRATIC OWNERSHIP OF THE MEDIA

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the University of Wolverhampton
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2004

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An exploration of Labour Party policy and debates on national newspaper ownership from 1972-2002, with regard to models for achieving pluralistic and democratic ownership of the media

Abstract

This thesis analyses how Labour Party discussions and policy development between 1972 and 2002 considered problems posed concerning political democracy and British press ownership and control. By examining the Labour policy formulated, and the surrounding debates, the thesis considers the extent to which policy corresponded to models for creating a pluralistic and democratic media that the first chapter outlines. The work also analyses to what extent the policy developed by Labour considered some of the difficulties with those models. It finds that the policy alternatives put forward in the earlier period considered in the thesis do not fully answer those difficulties. However, it is indicated that this does not provide sufficient explanation as to why, as happened, the policies were progressively abandoned.

To explain why earlier commitments were jettisoned, firstly, the work analyses how press ownership policy was created within the Labour Party in this period, in the context of changes in party policy more generally. It identifies how the sectors involved in press policy creation changed. This is then considered in relation to various 'classic' theories of Labour Party power relations. It concludes that an alternative Marxist analysis of party power relations provides an approximate explanation of policy creation. Secondly, the work posits that the pressure for Labour representation provided a tension with policies providing for press diversity and participative democracy. Moreover, it argues that this tension existed throughout the period from 1972 onwards. It considers the role of Labour representation in explaining the later thrust of Labour press policy within a hierarchy of influences, particularly the effect of going with the grain of economic globalisation.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor John Callaghan; Wolverhampton University for funding my research; Eric Shaw, Granville Williams, Mike Haynes, Jonathan Hardy, Jeremy Tonkin, Ruth and Jane Thomas for their help and support; and all those who kindly let me interview them.

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Introduction

Neil Kinnock was caught in a dilemma. He supported the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, a New Left pressure group committed to press democracy. But he knew he needed the support of the one daily title that had provided consistent support and representation of the views of the Labour Party, the *Daily Mirror*. And now his closest political allies were telling him that for this to continue he had to support Robert Maxwell, the latest would-be media autocrat. What was he to do?

This work is the story of 30 years of Labour party policy. It considers how the party had found itself in a position where Kinnock had limited choice but to welcome this 'monster' who he had secretly plotted against. And it will describe how later shifts in press ownership policy related to Tony Blair famously attending a Rupert Murdoch-hosted conference a decade later, followed by the *Sun*, 'wot won it' previously for the Conservatives, coming out for Labour.

WHAT THIS WORK WILL ARGUE

Chapter 1 of this thesis will explore what a democratic model press model might look like, by considering various theorists' models to provide for a democratic and diverse media. To put such a model into practice is a tall order. Yet, in the following chapters, it shall be argued that, for all their faults, some Labour Party discussions at least attempted to consider some of the complex, but important, aspects of a democratic press model. Groups and individuals, tending to be left/radical, attempted to provide answers to the problems identified with models outlined, which were stifled by forces that were more often on the right of the party. The undoubted difficulties with the alternatives developed in the party do not mean that they should just be dismissed out of hand. As we shall see in the first chapter, political democracy is still short-changed by the British press, where domination is by a few hierarchical conglomerates.

There are many examples where, in the slow process of policy implementation, problems have been ironed out. Curran gives an example of the Scandinavian press schemes where

this is the case.[1] There are also examples in other areas in British policymaking.[2] It is only through implementation that the power of groups such as journalists and/or pressure groups could have been assessed and adjusted, for instance, if this was required. Such difficulties provide a reason why there were disagreements in the Labour Party over implementing a democratic model that went beyond liberal pluralism. However, the problems were not a justification *on their own* for why no such system was implemented.

Instead, what will be suggested here, following the argument of Des Freedman when discussing broadcasting policy, is that this left/right divide punctuated policy debates and ended up marginalising attempts to answer the problems we identified.[3] This is of overwhelming importance. Also, however, it will be suggested that a consideration of Labour's recent history indicates a hitherto relatively unexplored difference of emphasis among those formulating the party's policies.

As we shall indicate, political democracy requires a diverse and democratically accountable press. However, it will also be argued that it necessitates press representation of different political and cultural viewpoints. This work suggests another factor involved in the non-implementation of Labour Party policies. It is related to the idea that the demand for diversity, democracy and, especially, broader representation was entwined with the anxiety that the Labour movement be represented in national newspapers. At the same time as the policies for structurally changing the press market to provide Labour movement representation through increased diversity and democracy became seen to be redundant, some forces placed a renewed emphasis on other methods to promote the Labour Party's voice in the existing press market.

In order to place the influence of this alongside other factors, the work will consider press policy within the context of the broader development of Labour policy. Two works considering media history have considered this wider context. Yet, Curran and Freedman,

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[1] Author interview with James Curran, May 9 2001.
[2] Hall, Phoebe. 1975. *Change, choice and conflict in social policy*. London: Heinemann Educational.
[3] Freedman, 2000. He identifies this divide in television policy as between the 'democratizing left' and the 'conservative right'. But, as with this work, he emphasises this is not a comprehensive division. (Freedman, 2003: 200-1).

as remarkably perceptive and important writers, have downplayed or consciously avoided the question of media management in their accounts of British press policy and Labour Party broadcasting policy, respectively.[4] However, it is this author's view that the related pressure for Labour representation in national newspapers needs to be considered when assessing the tensions in Labour press ownership policy, not just from the time of Kinnock onwards, but also in the 1970s and the early 1980s.

The tension between policies for diversity and democracy and those for Labour representation to counter perceived press bias has become more evident since the 1980s. Nevertheless, this work explores how these different emphases displayed themselves in a relatively disguised form in the 1970s.

It looks at how the tension became more pronounced after the election of Neil Kinnock. Evidence will be explored to show how the party leadership's relationship with Robert Maxwell meant that it was prepared to shift its position on press ownership in order to maintain newspaper support and representation. It considers the effect that failed attempts at a mass circulation Labour movement newspaper had on enthusiasm to increase Labour representation in press content through structural reform. It outlines how the decreased emphasis on representation through structural reform combined with a stronger emphasis on representation through political communications and press management. Furthermore, it considers how this increased the tensions between policies for representation and those for diversity and democratic control. From this, it considers how the changing emphasis of those forces seeking Labour representation within the British national press can shed light on newspaper ownership and cross-ownership policy under New Labour, alongside other factors, such as the pressure to go with the grain of globalisation.

One way to consider this dynamic is to analyse the progress of Labour Party press ownership policy within the context of power relations within the party. The influence of

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[4] In fact, despite explicitly stating this, Freedman does actually refer to political communications with regard to News International and New Labour and elsewhere. (Freedman, Des. 2000. *The television policies of the British Labour Party: 1951-2001*: University of Westminster.: 223-6, Freedman, Des. 2003. *Television policies of the Labour Party: 1951-2001*: London: Frank Cass: 118, 157-9).

different sectors of the Labour Party has been more pronounced at different times. Indeed, even the idea of there being *a single* Labour Party policy has been implicitly contested.[5] At various points, there has been a separate policy of the party, the leadership, and at times, the Labour government. And media reporting has further blurred these distinctions.

This study will discuss the sources of power and influence on the formation of Labour Party policy regarding press ownership regulation since 1972, with an emphasis on extra-parliamentary party policy formation. It will attempt to explain the period when reform was dropped from Labour's agenda. The complexly related issue of the *implementation* of policy will be discussed in relation to this, but will be of decidedly secondary importance. In order to put this into a context, Appendix 1 to Chapter 1 will consider the approaches of *some* political scientists' 'classic' works on the Labour Party. A key aspect of this work is that it is a theory-testing dissertation – testing how these more general theories can be applied in the specific area of press policy formation.[6]

The thesis will attempt to test these classic theories of power relations in the Labour Party using a triangulation approach, involving case study analysis of primary documentary and related sources, combined with in-depth interviewing.

In the sense that this work looks at one particular area of Labour Party policy over time, it is a historical case study using qualitative analysis.[7] As Charles Ragin defines it, as distinct from the comparative method: "Most historical, single-country analyses fit squarely within the domain of case-oriented studies because they are predicated on the idea that the interpretation of a specific case as a meaningful chronology is valuable."[8]

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[5] See Minkin, L. 1980. *The Labour Party conference: a study in the politics on intra-party democracy.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.: 318.
[6] For a discussion of theory-testing dissertations see Van Evera, Stephen. 1997. *Guide to methods for students of political science.* Ithaca, N.Y. ; London: Cornell University Press.: 29, 90.
[7] Ragin Charles, C. 1987. *The comparative method : moving beyond qualitative and quantitative strategies.* Berkeley ; London: University of California Press.: esp. 70-3, Van Evera: esp. 30, Harry Eckstein, 'Case Study and Theory in Political Science' in Greenstein, Fred, I., and W. Polsby Nelson. 1975. *Strategies of inquiry.* Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.: esp. 85.
[8] Ragin: 73. See also Eckstein: 85, Van Evera: 30.

Yin advises that such studies should employ different sources of information for its conclusions to be more convincing and accurate.[9] This work employs that form of triangulation.

The theory testing employed is more than of abstract academic interest, however. By considering the role of different actors, the thesis aims to draw out fresh insights in understanding how the party's newspaper policy developed. The final stage of this study will draw some conclusions concerning policy formation with regard to these approaches.

WHAT THIS WORK WILL CONSIDER

What this work will analyse is how Labour Party discussions and policy development looked at the problem to be posed in the first chapter concerning political democracy and British press ownership and control. It will examine the discussions and the policy formulated, within the development of broader Labour Party policy. The information collected will be utilised to provide conclusions as to what extent this corresponded to the models for a pluralistic and democratic media that will be outlined in Chapter 1. This work also analyses to what extent the policy developed has considered the problems that the discussion of those models also indicate. It chronicles the shifting nature of the sources creating press ownership policy within the party.

This information will be used to form conclusions as to the sources of policy formation, with regard to the approaches considered in Appendix 1 to Chapter 1. Centrally, the work explores the contention that Labour's determination to gain press representation provided a tension with policies to provide diversity and democracy. It considers the pressure for Labour representation as a factor in considering the thrust of Labour press policy within a hierarchy of influences, particularly that which has been understood as economic globalisation.

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[9] Yin: 8, 92-93.

From this outline of what the work will entail flow a number of questions, which it will consider:

1. Has Labour Party policy provided for a pluralistic and democratic system of press ownership and control?
2. Have discussions and prescriptions in the Labour Party considered and answered the problems indicated concerning the various models for providing democratic ownership of the control of the media, as already outlined?
3. Was there any tension between Labour movement representation and press ownership diversity and democratic control in Labour Party thinking?
4. Did Labour consider the link between the press and political democracy?
5. Have there been differentiations in policy between the Labour Party and the Labour government in the period from 1972 to the present day?
6. Has economic globalisation dictated Labour Party policy on press ownership?
7. Have shifts in the extent of influence on policy creation of different sectors of the Labour Party since 1972 affected press policy on ownership and control?

The first chapter will consider the problems with British newspaper ownership that earlier Labour policy attempted to address. Those problems that will be assessed are the relationship between political democracy and the press; that between ownership, diversity, concentration and control; the state of the British national press; cross-ownership; the effect of advertising on Labour representation in the press; and democratic participation in the newspaper industry. Chapter 2 will outline further the methods and reasoning underlying the study as a whole.

Chapter 3 will assess the period from 1972 until Labour entered government in 1974. It will explore the rise of the NEC sub-committees and their influence on policy creation, the models for a plural and democratic media considered by *The people and the media* report, which will inform later chapters, and the publication's effect on Labour Party policy.

The next chapter explores press ownership policy creation and debate within the Labour Party during the 1974-1979 government. It will explore any distancing between the policies of the Government and the party as to the question of democratic media ownership, as evidenced by the different attitudes of both to the 1977 Royal Commission on the Press. It will also explore the influences on party policy during that period, including the pressure for Labour representation.

The turbulent period from 1979 to 1983 will be considered in Chapter 5. Themes analysed here will include the role and policies of the Media Committee, as part of demands for 'leadership accountability' in the Labour Party. Its influence on the 1983 manifesto will be considered as well as a consideration of the relationship of policies developed to the various models for pluralism and democracy outlined in Chapter 1

Chapter 6 analyses the changes in policy on ownership and control during the Kinnock years. It explores relationships between this and shifts in party media presentation, associated with the renewed emphasis on press management, as a bid for Labour representation. Within this, the chapter will explore the changes within the party regarding the sources of policy creation and the decreasing emphasis on policies to structurally alter the press.

The seventh chapter will have as its subject the time of Smith and Blair as leaders of the party. The short-lived changes heralded by Smith in both policy creation and media relations will be briefly assessed. It will be argued that, with the general shift towards a pro-market agenda in all areas, the further emphasis on press management strategy to provide representation led to a further downplaying of newspaper policies that would provide for political democracy. The work will conclude in Chapter 8 by analysing the argument made within the context of other work that consider the question of Labour's press ownership policies.

1. Problems and Perspectives

"A newspaper is an individual piece of private property which has public responsibilities expressing the views of those people who are running it." (National Publishers' Association chair Lord Goodman, 1976)[10]

"Unless we can return to the principles of public service we will lose our claim to be the Fourth Estate. What right have we to speak in the public interest when, too often, we are motivated by personal gain?" (Rupert Murdoch, 1961)[11]

"Personally, I'm in favor of democracy, which means that the central institutions of society have to be under popular control. Now, under capitalism, we can't have democracy by definition. Capitalism is a system in which the central institutions of society are in principle under autocratic control... [I]t has tight control at the top and strict obedience has to be established at every level – there's a little bargaining, a little give and take, but the line of authority is perfectly straightforward." (Noam Chomsky, 1988)[12]

THE PRESS AND POLITICAL DEMOCRACY – THE FIRST PROBLEM

British democracy has a problem. Labour policy in the earlier period we are considering grappled with this problem. It does not have the press that it needs to function adequately. Only a few theorists of political democracy have considered what practices and principles

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[10] Newspaper Publishers' Association, *Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, November 30 1976: 14-5. Goodman was one of the 'great and the good', with close connections to the Labour leadership. He had served on a Royal Commission and the Arts Council and been director of such bodies as the Royal Opera House. (1979. *Who's who an annual biographical dictionary*. London: A. & C. Black).

[11] Quoted in Schultz, Julianne. 1998. *Reviving the fourth estate : democracy, accountability and the media.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.: back cover.

[12] Otero, C. P., and Noam Chomsky. 1988. *Language and politics*. Montreal ; New York: Black Rose Books.: 162.

the press and mass media should adopt to provide for democracy, according to John Street.[13] However, these provisions have concerned media scholars.

Philosopher Jurgen Habermas has provided an influential notion in providing democratic communication. In his idea of a public sphere, we get an outline, however abstract and idealised, of the media needed. We can take from this that a role of the press and media is to provide a space where discussion and differences in political debate can be aired. The press is explicitly ideological, providing 'lines' and viewpoints. This makes possible rational-critical public debate of political issues.[14]

From this, it follows that newspapers need to provide a platform for different politicians and interest groups to make plain their complaints and concerns – offering a dialogue for diverse views and political viewpoints.[15] Thus, titles need not be free from 'bias' or necessarily balanced. A public sphere requires a lively range of views.[16] Democracy requires diversity and pluralism in the press and media. There should be a number of differing political positions. Without this, the right to receive and impart information may be excluded for individuals and groups.

But it also necessitates representation. In political terms, the interests of democracy are served when a range of viewpoints are represented. It has been suggested that democracy requires there to be an allocation of newspaper and media resources for the persuasion of

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[13] Those that have include John Keane and Judith Lichtenberg (Keane, J. 1991. *The media and democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press., Lichtenberg, Judith. 1990. *Democracy and the mass media : a collection of essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.).

[14] Habermas, Jurgen, Thomas Burger, and Frederick Lawrence. 1989. *The structural transformation of the public sphere : an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.: esp. 57-72. It is important to note that the idea of Habermas that this public sphere operated in the late 17th and 18th centuries is debateable, however. A range of radical and liberal historians have challenged Habermas' historical interpretation. Of particular note is the criticism that Habermas downplayed the overt political controls that existed and the development of the radical press. (Curran, J. 'Rethinking the media as a public sphere' in Dahlgren, P. and Sparks, C. 1991. *Communication and citizenship : journalism and the public sphere in the new media age*. London: Routledge.: 39-46, Pusey, M. 1993. *Jurgen Habermas*. London: Routledge.: 90, 111, Wheeler Mark, C. 1997. *Politics and the mass media*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.: 35).

[15] Michael Gurevitch and Jay G. Blumler, 'Political Communication Systems and Democratic Values', in Lichtenberg: 269-89, 270, Street, John. 2001. *Mass media, politics, and democracy*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave.: 253.

[16] On this point, see Street: 258.

views that is roughly the same as the distribution of opinions in society.[17] This is a point we shall consider in the course of this work. At the very least, parties should have forums where their ideas are published. Culturally, newspapers need to represent minorities and marginal voices. Citizens and voters require this in order to effectively exercise citizenship.[18] The press and media operate to provide opportunities for citizens to learn and become involved.[19]

As we shall see, this notion of representation has its problems.[20] More particularly, the question of it was entangled in the Labour Party with a concern to have Labour's viewpoint represented in the press. This is a key subject of this thesis.

What is important to register at this stage, however, is that political democracy requires, at the least, press and media plurality providing wide and diverse representation. It has other requirements that we will deal with later in this chapter.

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[17] Arblaster, Anthony. 1987. *Democracy*. Milton Keynes: University of Minnesota Press.: 94-6.
[18] Werner A. Meier and Josef Trappel, 'Media Concentration and the Public Interest', in McQuail, Denis, Karen Siune, and Group Euromedia Research. 1998. *Media policy : convergence, concentration and commerce.* Thousand Oaks, Calif. ; London: Sage Publications.: 38-59, 42-3, Doyle, Gillian. 2002a. *Media ownership : the economics and politics of convergence and concentration in the UK and European media.* London: Sage, 2002.: 11-2, 170-1, Lively, Jack. 1975. *Democracy*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.: 35.
[19] Gurevitch and Blumler, *Democratic Values*: 269-89, 270.
[20] See Street: 258-9.

DOES OWNERSHIP MATTER?

If we are to consider Labour policy on ownership, diversity and concentration, then we need to consider the relationship between them. The relationship between concentration and diversity is not simple. There is surprisingly scant research evidence on the effects of concentration.[21] It has been disputed that ownership diversity aids political democracy.[22] There are those who argue that concentration brings diversity of content and little danger to democracy.[23] Research into the Canadian press has questioned the notion that diminished competition leads to less information diversity, for instance.[24] However, other US research showed that papers in competitive markets have been superior to monopoly titles.[25]

It can be theoretically argued that concentration means that firms can take advantage of their size to use their resources more effectively; so a greater output range can be provided and loss-making titles can be subsidised. Also, some consider that firms have to be large to survive and compete internationally in a world allegedly dominated by economic globalisation. Only such companies can maintain their independence from interest groups.[26] However, as Doyle indicates, most of these assertions are by no means automatically true. The savings made need to be invested.[27] Moreover, these are all arguments to the advantage of the large newspaper concerns, rather than the more general public interest and that of the reader. Indeed, the last point on independence can be turned on its head to suggest that press conglomerate accountability to diverse interest groups is what *is* required. We shall consider this point later.

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[21] Doyle, *Media Ownership*: 177. See also Meier and Trappel, 38-59: 39-40.
[22] Entman Robert, M. 1989. *Democracy without citizens : media and the decay of American politics*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[23] Compaine Benjamin, M., and Douglas Gomery. 2000. *Who owns the media? : competition and concentration in the mass media industry*. Mahwah, N.J. ; London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates., Compaine, Benjamin, 'The myths of encroaching global media ownership', 8 November 2001, Benjamin Compaine, 'A world without absolutes', 9 May 2002, opendemocracy.net
[24] Maxell McCombs, 'Concentration, monopoly and content', in Picard Robert, G. 1988. *Press concentration and monopoly : new perspectives on newspaper ownership and operation*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Pub. Co.: 129-37. also cited in Meier and Trappel, 38-59: 55.
[25] Bagdikian, Ben H. 1992. *The media monopoly*. Boston: Beacon Press.: 129.
[26] Meier and Trappel: 38-59: 44-5.
[27] Doyle, *Media Ownership*: 13, 17, 25.

Instead, writers have argued that media ownership concentration is deleterious to political democracy.[28] Media concentration leads to fewer information sources. Output becomes increasingly uniform. As is indicated by Meier and Trappel, the large press corporations' dominance can drive out smaller firms. This supremacy is strengthened by the nature of the newspaper market as a dual market, where advertising revenue can add to the domination of certain titles.[29] We shall consider this point further later.

As concentration increases, so does power in society and political power. In capitalist economies, this has meant business dominance.[30] What is of a large concern is that concentrated ownership leads to the political viewpoints and values of the dominant media owners, managers and firms being represented, in preference to other positions. The press can be used as vehicles for owners, managers and editors. Contrary political ideas can be squeezed out. Doyle identifies research on the media in France, Germany and Italy, which confirms that direct and indirect editorial interference is not confined to Britain – to the detriment of media diversity.[31] This may be for commercial or political reasons.

One effect, Peter Humphreys' research identifies, is that owners and managers can use their media to influence public policy.[32] This is important for how this work will consider New Labour's evolution. Recent research has pointed to dominant media corporations' use of political influence to relax regulatory obstacles to expansion. The rise of Silvio Berlusconi is the most notorious case in point.

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[28] Bagdikian, *The media monopoly*, Herman Edward, S. and McChesney Robert, W. 1997. *The global media : the new missionaries of corporate capitalism*. London: Cassell. Herman Edward, S. and Chomsky, N. 1994. *Manufacturing consent : the political economy of the mass media*. London: Vintage., McChesney, Robert W. 1997. *Corporate media and the threat to democracy*. New York: Seven Stories Press., McChesney Robert, Waterman. 2000. *Rich media, poor democracy : communication politics in dubious times*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press,.

[29] Meier and Trappel: 38-59: 46.

[30] See, for instance, Bagdikian, *The media monopoly*.

[31] Doyle, *Media Ownership*: 13, 18-22.

[32] Humphreys, Peter. 1996. *Mass media and media policy in Western Europe*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. Also cited in Meier and Trappel: 38-59: 47. See also Dores Cardusi and James Winter, 'Monopoly and Content in Winnipeg' in Picard: 139-145.

Whether it can be proved in all instances that media firms want some political opinions or types of cultural output to dominate, the risk exists. The greater the concentration there is, the greater the risk of abuse. It is true that other factors, such as the size and wealth of market, the extent which newspaper firms share resources, such as newsgathering through agencies, are important factors in gauging plurality. The extent that pluralism is affected by cross-media ownership, which we will consider in a moment, is partly dependent on whether consolidation promotes this same joint use of resources. Nevertheless, as Doyle indicates, though diverse press ownership does not *guarantee* plurality, it is a prerequisite.[33] Without diverse ownership, political democracy is compromised.

[33] Doyle, *Media Ownership*: 13, 18-22, 25, 27-8.

OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL – ARE THEY LINKED?

In order to consider Labour Party policy on press ownership and control we also need to consider the relationship between the two. The foregoing discussion assumes that the two are linked. But are they? Pluralists have questioned this. Similarly, firstly, Colin Seymour-Ure argues that ownership has become more complex as chief executives of British newspapers in the recent past have not been extensive capital owners and individual owners have not exercised control.[34] The notion that professional managerial control had become divorced from ownership was a well-known one in the Labour Party; advanced by the post-war revisionists and, particularly, Tony Crosland. Crosland argued that such managers had different interests than the profit-seeking owner of old. Capitalism, in this sense, was dead.[35] This *Managerial Revolution* saw managers as a separate class, from the 'capitalists proper', not dependent on private ownership.[36]

However, this idea was also effectively challenged. Economist Paul Mattick argued that in large corporations, the diffusion of share ownership meant that *for the majority of owners*, ownership and control *were* separate. Instead, this diffusion meant that less stockholding was needed for control over a corporation. Concentrated minority shareholders combined with managers and directors, who were usually shareholders also, to control the companies. Managers might have autonomous interests in areas such as the *distribution* of profits. But the concerns of large shareholders and managers were the same when it came to maximising profits in a competitive economy. Without this, the firm would be in peril.[37] Later research was sceptical of broader claims of writers such as Mattick. Nonetheless, it confirmed that company directors tended to own significant

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[34] Seymour-Ure, Colin. 1994. "Who Owns the National Press?" *Contemporary Record* 8.: 266.
[34] Crosland, Anthony. 1957. *The future of socialism*: London.: esp 14-18, Thompson, Noel. 1996. *Political economy and the Labour Party : the economics of democratic socialism, 1884-1995*. London ; Bristol, Pa: UCL Press.: 150-1, Seymour-Ure, National Press: 266.
[35] Crosland: esp. 14-18, Thompson, *Political economy*: 150-1.
[36] Burnham, James. 1942. *The managerial revolution : or what is happening in the world now*. London: Putnam.: Chapters 6, 7 and 8
[37] Mattick, Paul. 1971. *Marx and Keynes : the limits of the mixed economy*. London: Merlin Press, 1971.: 302-5, Mandel, Ernest, and Joris De Bres. 1978. *Late capitalism*. London: Verso.: 243-5.

shareholdings and had a shared origin in a propertied class of major shareowners that maintained "...participation in strategic control...".[38]

Thus, across industry, control has been dispersed between senior management and owners who share the same profit-seeking motives. With press firms, the tension is the age-old one between profit and political power, with the large minority shareholders and managers facing the same dilemma as the press barons of old. Commercial considerations were always there, along with political ones. It is still as true that even the most dictatorial of owners have commercial considerations to consider in a capitalist market. Any political motives would have to be fused with powerful pro-capitalist instincts. Many writers have quoted Lord Beaverbrook telling the 1947 Royal Commission that he ran his papers for 'propaganda and for no other purpose'. But he went on to tell the commissioners that: "No paper is any good for propaganda unless it has a thoroughly good financial position."[39] So, in fusing these motives, managers have acted like owners on a day-to-day basis; examples on Fleet Street being Lord Stevens, Lord Matthews and, more recently, Lord Hollick.[40]

Secondly, it has been argued that editors have assumed greater control. However, most importantly, the owners and chief executives make the hire and fire decisions. They choose the editors and senior managers. They set the financial parameters of individual newspapers and make the final 'bottom line' decisions, deciding whether newspapers live on or die. The editors operate within these 'bottom line' dictats, as the 1975 Royal

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[38] Scott, John. 1985. *Corporations, classes and capitalism*. London: Hutchinson.: Chapter 5, 175.

[39] Royal Commission on Press 1947-49 Minutes of evidence 26th day, 18.3.48, HMSO cmnd 7426, paragraph 8660, quoted in Richards, Huw. 1997. *The bloody circus : the Daily Herald and the left*. London: Pluto Press.: 3.

[40] For the latter, see Appendix 3 to Chapter 7. It is true, however, that managers are potentially beholden to directors who can oust them. This famously happened to Cecil King after he penned an article calling for Harold Wilson's resignation in 1968. (Bruce Hanlin, 'Owners, editors and journalists' in Belsey, Andrew, and Ruth Chadwick. 1992. *Ethical issues in journalism and the media*: Routledge.: 33-48, 38-9). Simon Jenkins makes play of the fact that Matthews was the representative of the late 1970s Fleet Street company heads who did not have a controlling interest and was responsible to a board and directors. (Jenkins, Simon. 1979. *Newspapers : the power and the money*. London: Faber.: 110). Yet, it was Lord Matthews who announced that: "By and large, the editors will have complete freedom as long as they agree with the policy I have laid down." (quoted in Baistow, Tom. 1985. *Fourth-rate estate: an anatomy of Fleet Street*. London: Comedia.: 5).

Commission on the Press was told.[41] For the media moguls who have existed in newspaper ownership, such as Rupert Murdoch and Conrad Black, Tunstall's research shows that in fact, they have built "...their acquisitions around their personal management...". Their managers have been important in how their firms operate. But they have intervened personally and relied on regular contact with managers and editors.[42]

Jeremy Tunstall's survey notes that some editors have seen their control increase since the 1980s. But this has happened as they have become 'editor managers' and 'entrepreneurial editors' – more integrated with the commercial management of the titles. So the prototype 'entrepreneurial editor' David English was a director of Associated Newspapers and David Montgomery was also managing director for part of his time as *Today* editor. Kelvin Mackenzie at the *Sun* and Andrew Neil at the *Sunday Times* were given increased editorial power by Murdoch after showing their profit-making ability on their respective titles. Both were "...vigorous editorial promoters of Murdoch and News International interests".[43]

Nevertheless, this does not mean that editors have become divorced from the owners and chief executives. Despite Tunstall's description of Neil and Mackenzie's power as 'untrammelled', Neil himself chronicles his regular discussions with Murdoch and emphasises the mogul's political influence on the *Sun*.[44] Tunstall describes the clearest example of the rise of editorial power on a broadsheet was that of Max Hastings on the *Daily Telegraph*. Yet, Hastings has written of the regular criticism Black subjected him to. He states that he "...never held the view that I could expect editorial freedom to be

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[41] "The editor...has to produce a newspaper which the management can sell and if he cannot do that, he has to go. He may produce a beautiful paper, loved by the staff, praised in every bar in Fleet Street, spoke well of in university departments and at dinners attended by statesmen. But if sales are going persistently down, the editor cannot be kept in office." (Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press, submitted by Mirror Group Newspapers Ltd., April 1975, (1) 31).

[42] Tunstall, Jeremy. 1995. *Newspaper power : the new national press in Britain.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.: 85, chapter 5.

[43] *Ibid.*: 125.

[44] Neil, Andrew. 1997. *Full disclosure.* London: Pan Books.: esp. 215-7.

absolute".[45] Tunstall, himself, also notes that the entrepreneurial archetype English talked on the telephone every day with Lord Rothermere.[46]

Thus, although control is now diffused with 'entrepreneurial editors' and senior managers, they still tend to share similar motives to the leading shareholder owners. In this sense, ownership and control tend to still be related, with the demands of business and the market as a crucial force. The most important exception to this is on the *Guardian*, where there was a history of editorial sovereignty. The Scott Trust, which had journalist members on the board, controlled ownership.[47] We shall also examine the question of editorial and senior journalist autonomy on the Mirror Group Newspapers later in this work.

[45] He thought it was reasonable that he should be constrained, along with readership wishes, by "...the need to maintain the broad confidence of the board and...Conrad." For his part, Black attacked the self-avowed Conservative Hastings for allowing pieces in the *Daily Telegraph* to be supposed penned by writers of "...some pinko journalism school administered by the John Pilger-Christopher. Hitchens Trust for the propagation of liberal mendacity...". (Hastings, Max. 2002. *Editor : a memoir*. London: Macmillan. esp.: 81, 250).

[46] Tunstall, *Newspaper power*: 114.

[47] Ayerst, David. 1971. *'Guardian': biography of a newspaper*. London: Collins.

THE BRITISH NATIONAL NEWSPAPER MARKET[48]

So political democracy requires press pluralism and pluralism needs diverse ownership and control. If we are to consider the Labour Party's policy on the press, we need to know whether the British national newspapers provide this. It may be argued that the British newspaper market has been able to deliver a relatively diverse output, if considered overall. (Though this is less true if we consider it as a segmented market, as we shall see in a moment). It has also been suggested that the press market's vitality is indicated by the rise in pages produced and the creation of new titles as others have folded.[49]

However, the number of newspapers has considerably decreased. Launching a new title is still an expensive and risky business.[50] The introduction of new technology and defeat of the British print workers has not resolved this.[51]

Moreover, ownership is not diverse. One method of assessing whether a market is an oligopoly is to apply a concentration ratio. In a media market, this assesses the audience

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[48] This work does not include the exclusively Scottish titles, the limited-circulation *Morning Star* and the sports dailies, which have not been regarded as part of the national press. (Williams, Kevin. 1998. *Get me a murder a day! : a history of mass communication in Britain.* London: Arnold: 215)

[49] John Tulloch, 'Managing the Press in a Medium Sized European Power', in Bromley, Michael, and Hugh Stephenson. 1998. *Sex, lies and democracy : the press and the public.* New York: Longman.: 64-5.

[50] Doyle, Gillian. 2002b. *Understanding media economics.* London: Sage Publications.: 126. Contrary to the claims of one editor writing about Fleet Street in the 1970s, using the gendered vocabulary of the time, it was not the case that "...any form of ownership and editorship is possible, and almost anyone with something to say can get it printed if he cares enough about it, and can find a few like-minded people to help him". (Wintour, Charles. 1972. *Pressures on the press : an editor looks at Fleet Street.* London: A. Deutsch.: 105).

[51] Since the introduction of the technology, new newspapers, such as the *Correspondent and Sunday Correspondent* floundered; still faced with high start-up and running costs. (McNair, Brian. 1999. *News and journalism in the UK : a textbook.* London: Routledge.: 161-2, 216-7). The *Independent* only survived after being bought out by the Mirror Group, before being sold on another multinational newspaper corporation. The other entrant *Today* was eventually bought up by News International, before being laid to rest. The pattern of entry has continued as it was when Sparks was writing. It has been "..either for an exiting large-scale publisher from outside this market to buy an existing title or for genuinely new entrants to fail and be taken over by existing large companies". (Sparks, Colin. 1999. "The Press." in *The media in Britain : current debates and developments*, edited by C. Stokes Jane and Anna Reading. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999.: 188-9, Sparks, Colin. 1995. "Concentration in the UK National Press." *European Journal of Communication* 10:179-206).

or readership share of the top four or five firms in the sector.[52] Press concentration has been a feature of international media ownership – both in western Europe and the world-dominating United States.[53] But the concentration ratio of the UK national press is among the highest in western Europe.[54] The top four firms account for more than 80 per cent of circulation – and the top five have more than 90 per cent of the total.[55] Concentration has significantly increased since the last Royal Commission on the Press, where there were concerns that there were nine nationals – each with a separate owner.[56] There are important economic reasons for this.[57] There is an incentive to increase market share, as long as there are not government restrictions on this.[58] Labour has considered this area of ownership legislation. Without these restrictions, the press marketplace is an example of market failure. And, by implication from what we have noted, it is also an instance of democratic deficit.[59]

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[52] Doyle, *Understanding*: 8-9.

[53] For Europe see Els De Bens and Helge Østbye, 'The European Newspaper Market' in McQuail, Denis, Karen Siune, and Group Euromedia Research. 1998. *Media policy : convergence, concentration and commerce*. Thousand Oaks, Calif. ; London: Sage Publications.: 7-22, 8. For the United States see Herman and Chomsky: 4-8, Bagdikian, *The media monopoly*, Herman and McChesney, and McChesney, Robert W. 1997. *Corporate media and the threat to democracy*. New York: Seven Stories Press.

[54] Meier and Trappel: 38-59: 50. The dominance of the national newspaper market is unusual in Europe. (Doyle, *Understanding*: 125, Sparks, *The Press*: 44).

[55] See Table 1, Source: Audit Bureau of Circulation. 2002. *National Newspapers – Sixth Monthly Report for the audit period: June 2002 to November 2002*, www.abc.org.uk

[56] Great Britain Royal Commission on the Press. 1977. *Royal Commission on the Press. Final Report.* London: HMSO.: 73, 185.

[57] Tendencies to ownership concentration have been prevalent in the British press since the eighteenth century. Although press mogul determination to amass perceived political power from ownership has affected the degree of concentration, there is also an economic reason for this. Economies of scale are very prevalent in the press and other media markets. Fixed costs, such as administration and editorial are high. Variable costs, such as newsprint, are relatively low. The marginal spending involved in providing an extra newspaper to an extra customer is low compared to average costs. Each extra copy costs little more than the price of its ink and paper. So there is a huge profit incentive to increase sales. (Doyle, *Understanding*: 14, 27, 123, Doyle, *Media Ownership*: 38, 59, Collins, Richard, and Cristina Murroni. 1996. *New media, new policies : media and communications strategies for the future*. Cambridge: Polity Press.: 8). Imperfect competition theory suggests that the cost advantages, which come from exploiting economies of scale, will determine whether the industry becomes an oligopoly. There is a pressure towards horizontal expansion where markets concentrate as newspaper firms acquire more titles. (Doyle, *Understanding*: 33-3, Doyle, *Media Ownership*: 13, Meier and Trappel: 38-59: 41-2).

[58] Doyle, *Understanding*: 9, 126. For reasons why the 'hidden hand' of the market has not corrected this see Sparks, *Concentration.*

[59] The trend to oligopolisation is part of a wider, if uneven, process of concentration of ownership within industry – a process that has developed in Britain since the latter part of the nineteenth century.(Baran Paul, A. and Sweezy Paul, M. 1968. *Monopoly capital : an essay on the American economic and social order.* New York ; London: Modern Reader Paperbacks.: 225, Engler, A. 1995. *Apostles of greed : capitalism and the myth of the individual in the market.* Halifax, N.S. ; London: Fernwood : Pluto. :36, Mandel, E. 1968. *Marxist economic theory*. London: Merlin Press.: 394). A figure like Karl Marx in the 1860s may well have

Table 1: British national daily newspaper ownership by circulation

Group	Title	Circulation	Share
News	***The Sun***	3,626,262	34%
Corporation	***The Times***	689,382	
Daily Mail and General Trust	***The Daily Mail***	2,435,038	19%
Trinity Mirror	***Daily Mirror***	2,118,405	17%
Northern and Shell	***Daily Express***	989,549	13%
	Daily Star	731,182	
Hollinger Group	***The Daily Telegraph***	991,465	8%
Pearson	***Financial Times***	454,154	3%
Guardian Media Group	***The Guardian***	399,185	3%
Independent News and Media	***The Independent***	224,165	2%
Total		12, 658, 787	> 99%

overemphasised the tendency towards concentration. He pointed out how competition between capitalists leads to the monopolisation of capital in a process where "...[o]ne capitalist always kills many." (Marx, K. and Engels, F. 1954. *Capital : a critique of political economy*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.: 714,

CROSS-OWNERSHIP AND SYNERGY

Aside from concentration, in the latter period, Labour Party battles have also been fought over another strategy in which press firms have engaged. This is 'diagonal' concentration, where companies diversify across different media in cross-media expansion or when non-media firms expand into the press or other media markets.[60] It is thus important to explore these at this stage. An example that Labour was particularly concerned with was newspaper expansion into television broadcasting cross-ownership.

Cross-media expansion might have a number of motives. Economies of scope can be achieved if two dissimilar products share some component, making it cheaper for them to be produced or marketed by the same firm. There is immense *potential* for economies of scope both for newspaper ownership and cross-ownership. Publishers of a range of titles can combine in such areas as advertising sales. A potential of cross-ownership is that a product created for one market, for instance a newspaper feature, is repackaged to be used in a television report. It can be argued that such expansion can lead to efficiency gains for business.[61] Again, firms justify expansion to internationally compete. However, as Ben Bagdikian, among others, argues, synergies provided for by cross-ownership can reduce the range of content and diverse ideas. This is due to the same material from the same corporate source getting recycled into different forms.[62]

How much synergy is realised in the British context is more open to debate. Cross-media ownership *can* achieve synergies.[63] However, how much this is possible is dependent on how much content can and is repackaged into different formats. According to Doyle's research, there is much scepticism among media companies and little positive proof that this is possible for press and TV cross-ownership. Instead, the only advantage of cross-

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Miliband, R. 1969. *The state in capitalist society*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.: 12-3).

[60] Doyle, *Understanding*: 33-3, Doyle, *Media Ownership*: 13, Meier and Trappel: 38-59: 41-2.

[61] Doyle, *Understanding*: 14-15, 28-9, Doyle, *Media Ownership*: 38-40.

[62] Bagdikian, *The media monopoly*: xii-xiii, 243-4.

[63] So specialist business newspaper owner Pearson can provide synergies by exploiting economies of scale and scope across different media products, i.e. the *Financial Times* newspaper, FT business magazines etc.

ownership has been the opportunity to cross-promote products between different media.[64] However, there is the potential for conflict with editorial integrity, as the press sacrifices potential impartiality for intra-corporate promotion. Newspaper firms have also promoted synergy to maximise profits, but not necessarily economic efficiency. They viewed that being in broadcasting could provide a more stable long-term profit.[65] This consideration will become important when we consider justifications given for relaxing cross-ownership legislation under the Blair government. We shall consider whether such policies are have been aimed at profit maximisation rather than plurality, economic efficiency rather than expanding democratic discourse.

ADVERTISING AND LABOUR REPRESENTATION

Another important feature of the newspaper market for considering political democracy and Labour representation is the effect of advertising. Newspaper finances are atypical within business. Like other media, newspapers operate in two markets simultaneously. The 'dual product' market is for both content and readers. Readers consume the newspapers in one market. The readers are sold to advertisers in another. Advertising is the main source of revenue for many newspapers.[66]

This leads to an important division in the national newspaper market. The wealthier have greater demand for newspapers. But there is also a far greater pressure for supply, as there is competition among publishers to provide high-income readers to advertisers. In 1998, the top 21% by income had more titles aimed at them than the bottom 50%.[67]

The broadsheet titles aimed at the wealthier gain a much larger percentage of their income from advertising, especially luxury goods and classifieds. The mass circulation

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[64] The *Sun* could be used to promote BSkyB, for instance. A company could use this to increase cross-sectoral dominance.
[65] Doyle, *Media Ownership*: 68-72. See also Hesmondhalgh, David. 2002. *The cultural industries : an introduction*. London: Sage Publications.:141.
[66] Doyle, *Understanding*: 12, Sparks, *The Press*: 51.
[67] Doyle, *Understanding*: 121.

press raise a great deal of their revenue from their cover price.[68] According to advertising industry figures, in 1999, of the £1.04 average revenue from each 'quality' UK daily sold, 74p came from advertising. Only 16p of the average 37p revenue from the 'populars' was derived from that source.[69] The cost per reader of the *Daily Telegraph* has been calculated at more than four times that of a popular title like the *Mirror*.[70]

This effect of the advertising market has been termed bifurcation.[71] This means that for broadsheets, it is possible to be competitive on a much lower circulation than that for the 'populars'. Thus, News Corporation closed *Today* as a loss-maker, with a circulation larger than three of the surviving 'quality' titles. The pressure of the advertising market means that for the tabloids, there is a pressure for huge sales.[72] There has been an attempt to sustain a mid-market sector among the nationals, making for a tripartite market. However, as Sparks indicates, the trends of the three sectors have been towards bifurcation.[73]

This has a significant implication for democracy. Lower income readers do not simply have to pay a larger percentage of their income to obtain their newspaper of choice. They are completely excluded from having the same range of press aimed at them as their richer counterparts. It has been claimed that the newspaper market, without an industry regulator, has been more effective than television at providing output aimed at diverse interest groups.[74] However, as Sparks notes, it is only in the elite newspaper market that there is any degree of ownership diversity. In the rest of the market, which is much larger, there is not the same plurality.[75]

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[68] *Ibid.*: 121-2.
[69] Advertising Association 2000, 13 cited in Doyle, *Understanding*: 122.
[70] Sparks, *The Press*: 52.
[71] Sparks, *Concentration*: 192.
[72] Sparks, *The Press*: 53. See also Tunstall, *Newspaper power*: 12-14.
[73] Sparks, *Concentration*: 192-7.
[74] Doyle, *Understanding*: 121, citing Hughes, Gordon, David Vines, and Institute David Hume. 1989. *Deregulation and the future of commercial television*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989.: 44.
[75] Sparks, *Concentration*: 195-7.

If democracy is dependent on receiving a range of information from different sources, then this means there is an inequality based on income. It pays to have quality journalism for the business community – hence the historically high quality journalism in the *Financial Times*, for instance. There is an important space in the broadsheets for information, debate and discussion on politics and economics. There are not the same pressures in the tabloid sector. In the populars, there is less space for such debate because of the compulsion to deliver a huge readership. The market demand is to fill the paper with accessible popular topics, such as sport, over informed discussion on current affairs.[76] This bias against low-income readers also affects the United States press, for instance.[77] But the UK press is unusual, in that bifurcation is so focused on the national dailies.[78]

Equally importantly, in each segment there are smaller circulation titles, which lose out in the economies of scale. They have to produce a similar paper but because of both sales and advertising, the market leaders will raise significantly more revenue. This puts the number two titles and so on, at a significant disadvantage, which has been exacerbated by the effect of advertising. The market leaders can typically charge more for advertising, such as the *Daily Telegraph* did in the early 1990s.[79] This operates as a barrier to entry for potential new competitors in markets.[80] But it also provides for a negative 'circulation spiral', where advertisers are attracted to the more successful newspapers, in a mutually reinforcing spiral of success.

Thus, the question of advertising is key. This, as we shall see, heavily influenced Labour Party discussions on diversity and representation. For many, this was a bias against

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[76] For a discussion of this, see Sparks, *The Press*: 53-4. See also McChesney, Robert W. 1997. *Corporate media and the threat to democracy*. New York: Seven Stories Press.: 24. An example possibly contrary to this is that of the *Mirror* in the period leading up to and during the Iraq war. However, the attempt to buck the market trend saw readership levels fall, albeit with rivals facing similar problems. It is also the case the *Mirror* kept up a large quota of celebrity news and sport, along with the more serious coverage. (Peter Cole, 'Have the 20p tabloids shot themselves in the foot?', 19 May 2002, Ciar Byrne, 'Mirror sales hit all-time low', *Guardian*, September 6 2002).

[77] Bagdikian, *The media monopoly*: esp. Chapter 6.

[78] Tunstall, *Newspaper power*: 8-9.

[79] *Ibid.*: 14-17.

[80] Sparks, *Concentration*: 190-1.

Labour representation. This could mean the Labour Party or the Labour movement; that is Labour and the trade unions. Importantly, in the earlier period of the time we are considering, these were seen as synonymous in this context. The most notable victim of this was the last title with direct connections with the Labour movement, the *Daily Herald*. Some in the Labour Party has been concerned about this from the end of the Second World War onwards, at least.[81]

We have seen that democracy requires press diversity and representation. Narrow newspaper ownership hampers diversity. Democracy also requires a platform for different ideas. Representation requires that a major party, such as the Labour Party, has its view articulated in the press. The work will indicate that Labour representation has been possible without the problem of ownership being tackled. The two are separate. (In addition, how advertising skews the market does not automatically bias it against the Labour Party, but is a problem for low-income readers).

As we shall see, although it appeared to those concerned that the demand for representation was synonymous with ownership diversity, later events showed they were not. This was not at all apparent to those involved. A range of party actors placed differing emphases on representation as opposed to diversity. Nonetheless, it can be argued that one division in the Labour Party policy in the period from 1970s could be defined by the underlying tension between these two demands. This was also entangled with another concern.

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[81] It may be true that the *Herald*'s fall in readership was significant, as Negrine suggests. But this does not deny that, as Negrine himself writes, that it had the 'wrong' sort of readership. (Negrine Ralph, M. 1994. *Politics and the mass media in Britain.* London: Routledge.: 69-70). See James Curran, 'Advertising and the Press', in Curran, *The British Press*: 250-53, Williams, G. and Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. 1996. *Britain's media : how they are related: media ownership & democracy.* London: Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom.: 66, Curran, J. and Seaton, J. 1997. *Power without responsibility : the press and broadcasting in Britain.* London ; New York: Routledge.: 299-300, Allaun, F. 1988. *Spreading the news : a guide to media reform.* Nottingham: Spokesman.: 20-8, Robertson G., 'Law for the press' in Curran, *The British Press*: 223, Seaton, J., 'Government policy and the mass media', in Curran, *The British Press*: 304, Baistow, *Fourth-rate estate*: 60, Snoddy, R. 1992. *The good, the bad and the unacceptable : press standards in the 1990s.* London: Faber.: 88-91, Hayward, R., 'Foreword' in Basnett, D., Goodman, G., Great Britain Royal Commission on the Press and Labour Party 1977. *Royal Commission on the Press : minority report.*: 1, Panitch, L. and Leys, C. 1997. *The end of parliamentary socialism : from new left to New Labour.* London ; New York: Verso.: 170-1, quoting Cripps, F. 'The British Crisis – Can the Left Win?, *New Left Review* 128, July-August 1981: 96-7, Williams, *Get me a murder a day*: 215-8.

THE PRESS AND POLITICAL DEMOCRACY – A SECOND PROBLEM

We have seen that political democracy has a problem. The British national press has failed in the requirement that it has diverse ownership. However, as an influential UNESCO report concluded, democratisation also requires participation in decisions over the mass circulation press by both those working in the media and newspaper readers.[82] As one noted democratic theorist has argued, democracy is to do with political equality – equality over decision-making, of which access to the media is a part. And, in order to guarantee that access for equality, it necessitates control by citizens.[83] There needs to be democratisation *of* the media, as well as democratisation *through* the media.[84] This is not such a strange idea. It follows on from the notion of representation, which will be so important in this work.

How can representation of different interests and political positions be achieved? Merely calling for press political and cultural representation is to take a narrow view of representation. It ignores which individual or organisation is providing this representation. Such a call is for representation without democratic control over that representation. It is to demand representative democracy without the democracy. As the UNESCO report made clear, citizen groups need both access to and participation in media systems – a right to communicate by citizens – dialogue rather than top-down monologue.[85] As Hagen notes, communication implies a two-way process.[86] The logic of calling for representation without democratic control is that there is no problem for

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[82] Lively: 35.

[82] As the UNESCO report suggested, there needs to be public involvement in the media management. (MacBride, Sean, and Problems International Commission for the Study of Communication. 1980. *Many voices one world: communication and society today and tomorrow: towards a new more just and more efficient world information and communication order: report by the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems*. London: Kogan Page.: 174, 267). It has also been argued that this demand for democratic communication was key to the 'New World Communication and Information Order, which UNESCO advocated. (Hagen: 22).

[83] Lively: 35.

[84] Hagen: 23, 25-6.

[85] MacBride: 172-4. It is instructive that the one signatory to the report who sought to underplay this notion was the Soviet Union's representative. Such an oppressive regime would hardly wish to emphasise the right to communicate. (*Ibid.*:172, 279).

[86] Hagen: 21.

representation, as opposed to diversity, with there being one owner of the whole British national press, say the News Corporation, just as long as a representative number of newspapers articulate the views of the different major parties, for instance. Of course, that conglomerate moved from supporting the Conservatives to more recently over-representing the major party of the left; the Labour Party in the period being considered. This is a key theme of this work. The problem remains, nevertheless. Political democracy requires democratisation of the press.

MODELS FOR OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

Now that we have considered some requirements of political democracy, it is possible to examine how Labour policies fared in providing for a press required to enhance this – to deal with these problems of ownership, diversity, representation and democratic control. To do this, it is important to map the media models that have been put forward, so we can compare Labour's policies with them. Such a survey will also help indicate what models have influenced Labour Party thinking in the period being considered. A useful review of the models on offer for providing a diverse press has been made elsewhere, so we shall not consider this question in such depth.[87] This work will concentrate on mapping the models specifically to provide democratic ownership and control of the press to associate with these diverse media.[88]

A Classical Liberal Pluralist Model

There is the liberal pluralist model. Liberal pluralists regard the market as playing a pluralist role. It enables anyone to publish any opinion they want. Independence from state control means that the press can operate as an effective watchdog. Classical liberal pluralists view that there is no democratic deficit as citizens already control newspapers – through the market. State attempts to interfere more than minimally with this process are explicitly undemocratic. However, it is consistent with such a position to call for some minimal anti-monopoly constraints. Liberal pluralists adapt the traditional 'fourth estate' argument, by suggesting that, through the market, the press reflects the views of those who buy it and therefore can act as a legitimate public mouthpiece.[89]

However, there are problem with these arguments. The British press market, as we have seen, is not diverse – ownership is concentrated. There are significant financial

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[87] See Curran, James. 1995. *Policy for the press*. London: Institute for Public Policy Research..
[88] Recent notable attempts to provide a democratic model for the media as whole have been by John Street and James Curran. (Street: Chapter 12, Curran, J. 'Mass Media and Democracy Revisted' in Curran, J. and Gurevitch, M. 1996. *Mass media and society*. London: Arnold.: 81-119, Curran, J. 'Rethinking Media and Democracy' in Curran, J. and Gurevitch, M. 2000. *Mass media and society*. London: Arnold.: 120-154).
[89] Curran, *Democracy Revisted*: 83-98, Curran, *Rethinking*: 29.

restrictions to market entry.[90] Also, proximity to business can act as a deterrent to investigating corporations.[91] The 'bottom line' mentality works against investigative reporting which is costly and unattractive to advertisers.[92]

As for the market as a democratic device, this assumes that the exclusive elite of press owners and controllers automatically subordinates its own views to provide an information service demanded by the consumers, in order to sell its product. However, as we have already seen, editors have chronicled how proprietors have taken an active role in influencing their titles. For instance, the assumption that press consumers dictate content ignores the fact that companies have wider business interests, which would be served by cross-promotion, for example. Also, corporations can use their newspapers to lobby for legislation readers have not demanded. James Curran and Jean Seaton outline how Rupert Murdoch has taken a hands-on approach to guiding the policies of his newspapers, on occasion in opposition to the views of a majority of the papers' readers. Murdoch is understood to have occasionally hand picked his editors for their views and bombarded inherited or caretaker editors with advice.[93]

In addition, as we shall refer to later in this work, the market itself is a relatively blunt instrument for expressing individual wants and desires. Choices are limited to those pre-existing. Supply creates its own demand as much as the other way round. One relatively recent survey of the American media considered that markets do not give people what they want but more "...what they want within the range of what is most profitable to produce and/or in the political interests of the producers".[94] As Curran and Street indicate, readers do not have the ability, via the market, to influence media content.[95] One

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[90] Curran, *Rethinking*: 93-4. See also Golding, P. and Murdock, G. 'Culture, Communications, and Political Economy', in Curran, J. and Gurevitch, M. 1996. *Mass media and society*. London: Arnold.
[91] Bagdikian, *The media monopoly*.
[92] Curran, *Rethinking Media*: 123-4, also cited in Street: 262.
[93] Curran and Seaton quote a series of recollections of former Murdoch paper editors backing up this claim. However, it not always clear as to the sources of these. (Curran and Seaton: 72-5, 86-8). Neil, in his recollections, says this move was personally enacted upon by Murdoch, who "...was impatient to create a *Sunday Times* in his own image". (Neil: 27-34).
[94] McChesney, R.W.Robert W. 1997. *Corporate media and the threat to democracy*. New York: Seven Stories Press.: 45-6.
[95] Curran, *Rethinking Media*: 262.

cannot denote one's preferences for particular parts of the 'bundle' that make up newspapers. It is the market's flaws as a democratic tool that requires marketing devices to be used to discern consumers' unsatiated desires, as we shall see in Chapter 6. Moreover, importantly, the free market's view of 'one dollar, one vote' provides for plutocracy, not democracy. People neither voted for Rupert Murdoch nor Conrad Black.[96] This problem of inequity is particularly the case in the press market. As earlier indicated, it is heavily shaped and structured by advertisers, stripping lower income readers of the possibility of exercising their own preferences, even if they are prepared to spend the same cash as their richer counterparts.

Nevertheless, any attempt to influence press ownership legislation faces the historically prevalent liberal pluralist notion in Britain that freedom of the press means ownership freedom from any government control.[97] Yet, as Curran identifies, the key contradiction at British media regulation's heart is that it has been assumed that the press should be organised as a free market and broadcasting is to be publicly regulated. This led to the contradictory situation where policies regarded as harmful for the press were propagated as worthwhile for broadcasting.[98]

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[96] McChesney, *Corporate media* : 45, Frank, Thomas. 2002. *One market under God : extreme capitalism, market populism and the end of economic democracy*. London: Vintage: 86-7, 97, 93, 366-9.
[97] See, for instance, Harrison, Stanley. 1974. *Poor men's guardians : a record of the struggles for a democratic newspaper press, 1763-1973*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.: chapter 10, esp. 218, 232.
[98] Curran, *Policy for the press*: 1.

The Public Service Model

To extend this latter theme, the public service model also attempts to answer the liberal pluralists' contradictions by applying the broadcast model to newspaper ownership and separating the press and media from business and advertiser domination. Although, as we shall see, it provides a potential for diversity, it does not guarantee it. The radical models for the press flowing from it were associated with a left social democratic ideal within the Labour Party.[99] These concentrated as much on providing balance and increasing representation, as developing diversity.

The public service model regards communication as operating as a decommodified 'public good', based on universal access and democratic equality.[100] Communication is not regarded like any other economic good in a market system. Instead, reflecting Habermas's idealised public sphere, the notion "... is not that of maximising customers in a market but of serving citizens in a democracy...", providing a realm for democratic discussion.[101]

Here democratic control is primarily exercised by the state on the behalf of the people, who elected its representatives. In this sense, it shares elitist conceptions with the liberal pluralist model. Its advocates suggest that the public service model requires media to be separate from the state.[102] However, this independence is by no means automatic. The emphasis is on state regulation as the form of control.[103]

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[99] Curran, James, 'The different approaches to media reform' in Curran, J., Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. 1986. *Bending reality : the state of the media*. London: Pluto in association with the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom.: 99, Curran and Seaton: 338.
[100] Scannell, P., Schlesinger, P. and Sparks, C. 1992. *Culture and power : a media, culture & society reader*. London: Sage Publications.: 139-141, Scannell, P. 'Public Service Broadcasting: The History of a Concept' in Goodwin, A. and Whannel, G. 1990. *Understanding television*. London: Routledge.:25-6, Tracey, M. 1998. *The decline and fall of public service broadcasting*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.: 26.
[101] Tracey: 11-13, 26, Scannell, *Public Service Broadcasting*:11-29.
[102] Tracey: 30-1.
[103] Scannell, *Public Service Broadcasting*:14-18.

A difficulty with this is, again, state control.[104] Those in the Labour Party who advocated a radicalised adaptation of this model for the press supported extensive state involvement.[105] In less radical versions, it still faces the danger of state censorship and dominance over appointments and funding. State regulation can be used for party political advantage. It runs the danger of paternalistic elitism.[106] Particularly, like the liberal pluralist model, it can exclude democratic accountability by press workers and newspaper readers.

Marxist Models

This latter point has been a concern for a series of Marxist blueprints for democratic ownership and control of the press and media. Marxists, in tandem with other thinkers, have tended to emphasise that the British press, is not characterised by diversity and is controlled by a small, unelected sector of society.

Revolutionary Marxists believe that creating democratic media requires a societal shift.[107] They have strained to break free from the association with the Soviet Union, with its party and state domination of the media.[108] Some that have, have advocated an initially more promising model based on *democratically-elected* workers' councils. Such a notion is in the heritage of the powerful criticisms Jean-Jacques Rousseau made of parliamentary representative democracy, which limits the involvement of citizens to an infrequent vote. The Marxists see this as insufficient to ensure that the majority have influence over all the decisions that affect their lives.[109] These elected councils would make society's decisions and those regarding the press in the same way. The

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[104] Keane: 94-114, 116, Curran, *Rethinking*: 48. See also Williams, R. 1966. *Communications*: Chatto & Windus.

[105] RD 2222, Michael Meacher, 'Reform of the Press', March 1982, NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 6th meeting', 19 January 1981.

[106] Keane: 119-124, Curran, *Rethinking*: 48.

[107] Sparks, C. 1985. 'The Working Class Press: Radical and Revolutionary Alternatives'. *Media, Culture and Society* 7: 133-46., Curran, *Rethinking*: 36.

[108] Curran, *Rethinking*: 36.

[109] Held, D. 1987. *Models of democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishers.: 130, Lenin Vladimir, I.i. 1965. *The state and revolution : the Marxist theory of the state and the tasks of the proletariat in the revolution*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.: 45-6.

revolutionary Marxists have also advocated a national public printing corporation, where there would be access for citizens to print their own papers, enabling diversity and participation.[110]

However, radical liberals and others view the operation of council-based direct democracy as hostile to diversity. It is based on a notion that there would be an end of interest differences and all disputes would be resolved.[111] Thus, there would be no need for mechanisms to protect and mediate a plural press. As Street suggests, there is a pressure under such a system to create press and media that aims to create collectivity by guarding against dissent.[112]

Clearly, this is utopian and potentially harmful. Differences would still persist.[113] The 'end of politics' notion is unrealistic and deterministic.[114] The danger is that, despite the best of intentions, the state could dominate, as happened in the East European states. Propaganda could overpower discourse.[115]

There are those in the Marxist tradition who have rethought this notion to answer this classic 'end of politics' problematic.[116] Nevertheless, the whole conception assumes a very different society from that which Labour is operating in. Any democratising solution would need to consider very carefully *replacing* representative institutions, rather than supplementing them, by participative devices.

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[110] V. Lenin, First Congress of the Communist International in Lenin about the Press, cited in A. Mattelart 'For a *Class* and *Group* Analysis of Popular Communication Practices' in Mattelart, A. and Siegelaub, S. 1983. *Communication and class struggle.* New York: International General.: 39-40, T. Ali, 'Culture, the media and workers' democracy' in Gardner, C. 1979. *Media, politics and culture : a socialist view.* London: Macmillan.: 158.

[111] Pierson, C. 1986. *Marxist theory and democratic politics.* Cambridge: Polity Press.: 27-9, 188-9, Devine, P.J. 1988. *Democracy and economic planning : the political economy of a self-governing society.* Oxford ; Cambridge: Polity in association with Basil Blackwell.: 146-7.

[112] Street: 267.

[113] Devine: 147.

[114] Pierson: 188-9, Devine: 147.

[115] Street: 267.

[116] Devine.

Nevertheless, it would be mistaken to reject this approach entirely. Participatory democratic theorists argue representation is not sufficient for democracy. Citizens need to be involved in other spheres including the press and media, as we saw earlier. Participative democracy's strength, as one advocate indicates, when considering both political and media democracy is that "...it relies on the ability of citizens to make informed decisions rather than choose between elites to make decisions for them".[117]

A further model of democratic ownership and control of the media comes from a neo-Marxist New Left source more open to reforming and transforming institutions under capitalism. Raymond Williams' proposals would be for the state to fund independent self-managed institutions providing newspapers run by "...the only people capable of guaranteeing ... [press] ... freedom: the working journalists themselves".[118]

A problem with this system is the idea that democracy equals pure producer democracy – that journalists should have sole ownership and control over production. While Tom Baistow's solution to put editors into the dominant position, would be more autocratic, Curran and Seaton and the Marxists consider sole journalist control as elitist and implicitly undemocratic.[119] Such a system would at least require further checks and balances.[120] There would need to be a role for civil groups and parties, as well as readers – those that democracy requires be represented in newspapers.[121]

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[117] Hagen: 18, 25.

[118] There would be the same arms-length relationship to the state as happens with research awards in higher education, with a communicator-controlled administration handing out grants to media producers. (Williams, *Communications*: 170).

[119] Baistow, *Fourth-rate estate*, Curran and Seaton: 347, G. Sheridan and C. Gardner, ''Press Freedom': A Socialist Strategy', in Gardner, C. 1979. *Media, politics and culture : a socialist view*. London: Macmillan.: 124-5.

[120] Curran and Seaton: 346-7.

[121] For a broader argument concerning economism and industrial democracy see Bobbio, Norberto, and Richard Bellamy. 1987. *Which socialism? : Marxism, socialism and democracy*. Cambridge: Polity.: esp. 84.

Radical Alternatives

When considering political democracy, some authors, many from the New Left, have appeared to transcend the divide between critical Marxism and radical pluralism.[122] One example of this evolution comes from the work of the important liberal pluralist writer Robert Dahl.[123] An important New Left thinker who has advocated participatory democracy is Carole Pateman, who argues that it is precisely through involvement that citizens 'learn' democracy.[124] A similar evolution has also happened for those considering political democracy and the press and media. Habermas, for example, comes from a critical eclectic Marxist perspective, but is influenced by classical liberal conceptions of the media.[125]

It might be thought that Habermas, and his notion of a public sphere, would provide a useful model for diversity and democratic control. As we have indicated, he considers that for political democracy the public sphere needs to be separate from the state and the market. However, he is less concerned with the democratic ownership and control of the media. He later answered his critics who saw his original account as painting a picture of an inaccurate golden age contrasted with an incorrectly analysed distopian present.[126] However, frustratingly, he did not conceive of how the media should be organised in this revised account.[127]

Instead, in order to avoid the problems of traditional direct democracy, Street identifies with a revised version. He looks to 'associative democracy', advocated by radical

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[122] Held, *Models*: 210-212, Chap. 9, Pierson: 189, Curran and Seaton: 345-7.
[123] His later work sees capitalist ownership and control, including over information, as providing an important source of political inequality. He advocates self-government within enterprises as part of a system that combines representative democracy with some direct participative strands. (Dahl Robert, A. 1985. *A preface to economic democracy*. Cambridge: University of California Press.: 54-5, 74-5, 111, 112-6). See also Held, *Models*: 200-1, O'Leary, B. and Dunleavy, P. 1987. *Theories of the state : the politics of liberal democracy*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education.: Chap. 6, Devine: 149-50.
[124] Pateman, Carole. 1970. *Participation and democratic theory*: Cambridge.: 29, Hagen: 22.
[125] Curran, *Rethinking Media*: 135.
[126] Habermas, J. 'Further reflections in the public sphere' in Calhoun Craig, J. 1992. *Habermas and the public sphere*. Cambridge, Mass. ; London: M.I.T. Press.: 432-445, Curran, *Rethinking*: 39-46, Curran, *Rethinking Media*: 135-6, Pusey, *Habermas*: 90, 111.
[127] Curran, *Rethinking*: 136.

democrat writers, such as Paul Hirst. Here power is devolved to autonomous associations. For Hirst, democracy is defined in terms of communication – this enables associations to coordinate and identify their demands. The state's role is to facilitate this. This would provide a more pluralist basis than direct democracy, as Street indicates. Different positions could be expressed as a way of resolving conflicting demands through dialogue.[128] A question mark, however, would remain concerning the role of the party, as with direct democracy.[129]

Also, a difficulty with Hirst's definition of associative democracy is that he emphasises the role of consumer and civil groups as agents of this new democratising impetus in both the private and public sectors. He puts little stress on the role of employees or unions. The version of associative democracy advocated by Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers envisages a reinvigorated union movement as an important 'secondary association', which would represent workers on works councils, for instance, and would have some participatory involvement in the companies they worked in. Nevertheless, they envisage this within a framework where some of the state's functions would be devolved to these secondary associations and participation would involve the union enforcing state regulation and regulating its workers, traditionally associated with corporatism.[130] They also see the need for more broadly defined arenas than those indicated by workplace democracy.[131] Street associates this notion of associative democracy with two further models of democratic ownership and control, which this work has also considered.

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[128] Street: 267-8, citing Hirst Paul, Q. 1994. *Associative democracy : new forms of economic and social governance*. Polity Press. 1994.: Polity Press.

[129] This is a point Peter Mair considers (Mair, Peter. 2000. "Partyless Democracy." *New Left Review*, March April 2000, 21-35).

[130] Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, 'Secondary Associations and Democratic Governance' in Cohen, Joshua, Joel Rogers, Olin Wright Erik, A. E. Havens Center for the Study of Social Structure, Change Social, and Project Real Utopias (Eds.). 1995. *Associations and democracy*. London ; New York: Verso.: 7-98. Cohen and Rogers later distanced themselves from a traditional corporatist framework. (Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, 'Associations and Democracy', in Cohen and Rogers: 236-267. However, various commentaries on their work, both positive and negative, see this corporatist connection. (See, for instance, Jane Mansbridge, 'A Deliberative Perspective in Neocorporatism' in Cohen and Rogers: 133-147 and Andrew Levine, 'Democratic Corporatism and/versus Socialism' in Cohen and Rogers: 157-166).

[131] Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, 'Associations and Democracy', in Cohen and Rogers, 236-267: 252.

In the first, the radical pluralist John Keane sees the present capitalist media system as dominated by the market, bringing oligopolisation, which has excluded minority media representation. He suggests that to counter this concentration, his 'modified public service model' would enable a diversity of non-market institutions independent of the state, but state-enabled. These would include, as with the Marxist conceptions, publicly owned printing facilities.

Ownership and control of such entities would be mixed. Keane regards the application of direct democracy in the media as limited. He outlines instances where one person's freedom of expression could curb another, indicating that freedom and equality of communication cannot be definitively realised.[132] (Nevertheless, there would be public accountability and toughened regulation of ownership structure, rather than direct nationalised state control).[133]

Despite his anti-statist rhetoric, it should be noted that what Keane describes as a "...carefully spun spider's web..." of intervention and regulation, along with extensive public subsidies and market suspension, would require state intervention.[134] Also, such a model, based on a radically transformed "...post-capitalist civil society..." and not dominated by commodity production and exchange, but publicly funded and self-organising, appears utopian without societal change.[135] Nevertheless, where Keane's model is particularly useful is in emphasising the need for a combination of regulation and other forms of control and ownership, under a significantly decommodified system.

A direct attempt to address the problem of providing the diversity which liberal pluralists desire, but which the market on its own has shown to be incapable of providing, comes with the social market model or radical market model.[136] Other examples of this form of interventionism have been successfully applied in other European countries, as we shall see in the appendix to Chapter 3. For the press, intervention has taken the form of

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[132] Keane: xiii, 124, 155.
[133] Ibid: 68-91, 152-4, 158. See also Curran and Seaton: 346-7.
[134] Keane: 154, Curran and Seaton: 347.
[135] Keane: 152.
[136] Curran, *Policy*: 13-14. Curran, Different approaches: 91.

attempts to redistribute advertising revenue and subsidy to provide for new start-ups to diversify the newspaper market. This model can be more clearly considered as providing diversity for democracy, rather than democratic control.

Nevertheless, Curran has more recently developed a social market model, which borrows from the European initiatives, with a plethora of different forms of control and ownership. In doing so, it provides one answer to the problem identified of journalist domination over broader citizen control. A sector where there could be journalistic control would be just one component of the system. It would have a public service core, a 'civic media section' for parties, interest groups and social movements to be supported. In addition, there would be a private enterprise sector where the editorial independence of journalists could be protected. It would also contain a social market sector of minority media, which could include organisations with consumer or community representation. Also included would be self-managed enterprises, which would include some journalist control, and a 'professional media sector', where there could be staff control. Thus, there would be a combination of areas with journalist control and others with community representation.[137]

Again, Curran envisages this system for broadcasting and publishing and it would need to be adapted. 'Independence from the state' needs to be more clearly defined. Such a model would be idealistic in the context of a capitalist democracy.[138] It requires some clarity about the economic and political structure that would be associated with it. However, such a notion has the merit of going beyond merely journalistic democracy and purely party representation to consider broader community representation. While such a model may again appear utopian, it mainly borrows from existing European media systems; therefore indicating that it is at least possible.

Thus, this survey indicates that no definition of a press required for political democracy is entirely free from problems. However, some strands of the alternative systems can be highlighted which fuse aspects from the social democratic, Marxist and radical

[137] Curran, *Rethinking Media*: 120-154, Street: 268-270.
[138] Street: 270.

democratic traditions. A democratic model of ownership and control would need to represent a diverse range of opinions, including those of minorities and temporary majorities. Such a model would need to avoid market domination and censorship as well as paternalistic, bureaucratic and authoritarian state control. This would require some form of democratic control of, and participation in, the running of the media industries both by the workers in those enterprises and by the wider community.

So, this chapter has explored some problems for political democracy with the British press. It has also considered some of the media models outlined to deal with such problems. To see how this work will compare Labour's policies with these media models, it is worth indicating what are the methods and reasoning underlying this thesis. That will be the subject of the next chapter.

3. Methods: How this work will consider Labour's press policy and why

Why the press?

The first question to consider is regarding the legitimacy of studying the British national newspaper market at all. In a multimedia world, why should policy on the national press and its ownership still be regarded as an important area of study? After all, it is assumed that most British people now receive information about the news and politics predominantly from the broadcast media, rather than the newspapers.

As we shall see, the press has had a particular importance in the period we are considering. Unlike other mass media, there was not the same pressure for 'balance' in its output. Thus, it has had the scope to be more obviously politically weighted in its coverage. It was precisely for this reason that it attracted the attention of the Labour movement as a whole, which perceived the press as predominantly partial in its reporting, at least for the earlier period we are studying.

A related reason is the British national newspapers' relationship to the broadcast media. The study of media influence on voters is contentious and inconclusive. It has its own methodological problems.[139] Nevertheless, some writers have tentatively suggested that television could have some long-term influence on voter behaviour.[140] Equally, studies of the 1980s and early 1990s, for instance, have pointed to the influence on news values that

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[139] Many studies have concentrated on elections. But this may be too short a time to register influence, may ignore media campaigns outside elections and ignore longer-term socio-political influences on voters. It is also difficult to separate media effects from other influences, and it may be that different social and demographically-differentiated groups interpret information in different ways. (Franklin, Bob. 1994. *Packaging politics : political communications in Britain's media democracy*. London: Edward Arnold.: 216-7, Harrop, M., 'Voters' in Seaton, Jean, and Ben Pimlott. 1987. *The media in British politics*. Aldershot ; Aldershot: Avebury : Dartmouth.: 46, Heath, A. F., Roger Jowell, and John Curtice. 1985. *How Britain votes*. Oxford: Pergamon.).

[140] Miller William, L. 1991. *Media and voters : the audience, content, and influence of press and television at the 1987 general election*. Oxford ; Oxford ; New York: Clarendon Press : Oxford University Press.: 165, Miller William, L. 1990. *How voters change : the 1987 British election campaign in perspective*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.: 231-2, Franklin, *Packaging politics*: 219-20.

the Conservative press had on broadcasters. It was perceived that there were areas where the press focused and the broadcasters followed.[141] In defining the news agenda for broadcasters, the press still played a significant part.

What is more, those in the Labour Party interested in the media conceived this to be case, as we shall see. In the earlier period we are considering, when the focus was more on ownership, national newspapers were considered important. Later, as Kinnock's leadership concentrated more on press and media management, Labour strategists focussed on contacts in the broadsheet press, whose output, it was believed, affected the political agenda of what was perceived to be the more influential broadcast media. More latterly, there has been an emphasis on managing the tabloid press, following Kinnock's experience in the 1992 election. Thus, some studies have indicated the continuing significance of the press on British political communications and, more importantly, so has the Labour Party. In all this time, when considering the national press, the Labour Party focussed its attention on the mass circulation broadsheet and tabloid daily and Sunday newspapers covering all of Britain. So shall this work.

Party policy and power

There are two pressures weighing on this type of historical research. One is that too great an awareness of epistemological issues can deter creative investigation.[142] The other is that a writer can stay mired in empiricism. A methodological problem to be confronted is that of demarcating the study area and its analytic boundaries. There are a number of ways to consider Labour Party policy on press ownership. Some work on media ownership and regulation policy makes changes in national and international regulatory law its broader canvas.[143] Other work has considered it in the context of British

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[141] Negrine: 178, MacArthur, B. 'The national press' in Crewe, Ivor, and Martin Harrop. 1989. *Political communications : the general election campaign of 1987*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.: 97, McKie, D. "Fact is free but comment is sacred'; Or was it The *Sun* wot won it?' in Crewe and Harrop: 124.
[142] Minkin, Lewis. 1997. *Exits and entrances : political research as a creative art*. Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University Press.: 196, 208.
[143] For example, Humphreys, *Western Europe* and Sanchez-Tabernero, Alfonso, and Alison Denton. 1993. *Media concentration in Europe : commercial enterprise and the public interest*. [Manchester]: European Institute for the Media.

government media and newspaper policy, more generally.[144] Also, it has been situated within social democratic policy internationally, to some extent.[145] This work's emphasis is different in that it is mainly written from the perspective of modern Labour Party history. It considers press ownership policy within the context of power relations in the Labour Party and the changes in party policy more generally. Its context is modern political history rather than just media history.

Within this, one needs to specify Labour Party policy. Following Lewis Minkin, this work regards the Labour Party's conference as pivotal.[146] It will define party policy as that decided by the conference. When one set of actors – usually the leadership – designates that the party's policy is different to this, the thesis will make this clear. Another related problem is the relationship between decisions made by the Labour Party and those of the Labour government. The work shall deal with this in some detail, when considering the Blair government in Chapter 7.

As Appendix 1 to Chapter 1 notes, there are a series of classic texts on power relations in the Labour Party. As we indicated, this work is partly a theory-testing dissertation. Such dissertations may involve large-*n* analysis. However, they can also take the form of a case study, as with this work.[147] The work uses empirical evidence in one area of Labour Party policy to evaluate the pluralist, Marxist and elitist theories outlined in the 'classics'.[148] In doing so, it seeks to consider changes in power relations with regard to those theories. It assesses how these theories apply to the development of press policy.

The author of one of those theories, Minkin, considers that a key aim in his research is not just to analyse power distribution, but also to assess what have been the variations in

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[144] For instance, Negrine and Curran and Seaton

[145] For example, Curran, James. 2000. "Press Reformism 1918-98: A Study in Failure." in *Media power, professionals and policies*, edited by Howard Tumber. London ; New York: Routledge. and, to a lesser extent, Allaun, *Spreading the news*.

[146] Minkin, *Labour Party*: xiv.

[147] Van Evera: 29, 90.

[148] The criticism of case studies – that they cannot be generalised – might be applied to this work. (Van Evera: 53). However, Yin argues that case studies can be generalised into theory. (Yin Robert, K. 1994. *Case study research : design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1989.: 36-7). More importantly, that is not the task of this work.

distribution over time and why they have happened.[149] This work has the same goal. It also considers how the different press ownership policy responses relate to the aim of newspaper diversity and the various models of democratic ownership. Case studies can be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory.[150] This research uses empirical evidence to test the classic theories and, in this sense, it is descriptive. But, in trying to identify why there have been power shifts, it also aims to be explanatory.[151]

One classic definition of power is that of Bertrand Russell – "...the production of intended effects".[152] This work follows Minkin's adaptation of this notion of power when considering Labour conferences as "... the ability to affect policy".[153] However, research involving the nature of 'power' and 'influence' is beset with problems. It is difficult to test such phenomena.

One problem was uncovered when a classic pluralist study of power was famously criticised for its behaviourist approach. By considering the decisions that could be clearly observed, Robert Dahl's work was said to ignore 'nondecisions' – the power to exclude issues from debate. Power was exhibited when a person or organisation created or reinforced social and political values and practices that barred public discussion on issues harmful to that person or institution. Power was displayed when bias was mobilised. From this, Steven Lukes considered the way that political agendas have been controlled.[154] Nelson Polsby has criticised this approach as it entails the "...raising of possibilities...", which does not "...substitute for competent empirical investigation...".[155] It is clearly easier to document decisions actually taken. Equally, this work may be criticised for taking sides in a debate, which relates to the theories it is testing. Yet, this

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[149] Minkin, *Exits*: 69.
[150] Yin: 4, Minkin, *Exits*: 61.
[151] Minkin, *Exits*: 61.
[152] Russell, Bertrand. 1995. *Power: a new social analysis*. London: Routledge, 1995.: 25.
[153] Minkin, *Labour Party*: xi, 380.
[154] Dahl Robert, Alan. 1961. *Who governs? : democracy and power in an American city*. New Haven ; London: Yale University Press., Baratz Morton, S., and Peter Bachrach. 1962. "Two Faces of Power." *American Political Science Review* 56: 947-52., reprinted in Russell, Bertrand. 1995. *Power: a new social analysis*. London: Routledge, 1995.,Chapter 1, Lukes, Steven. 1974. *Power : a radical view*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
[155] Polsby Nelson, W. 1980. *Community power and political theory : a further look at problems of evidence and inference*. New Haven ; London: Yale University Press, 1980.: 218, 189-218.

work only attempts to assess the area of 'nondecisions' to the limited extent of those that are, to some degree, 'tangible'. It addresses areas which were previously included in party debates and explores why they were dropped from deliberation. The work considers why areas of debate on press policy in the Labour Party became excluded from discussion, for example.

A related problem is that of 'anticipated reactions'. That is, groups and individuals modify their aspirations according to the political environment. They "...anticipate the reactions of those who are affected by their actions".[156] One factor, which indeed may influence decisions, is anticipation of press reaction. Yet, there are no means to measure the extent of influence that anticipated reactions make on decisions.[157] Also, to indicate that actor A's reaction influences actor B, one must prove that B is convinced of A's power capacity and changes her behaviour accordingly. The press is seen to have power when it can be proved that policy is not enacted in anticipation of newspaper reaction.[158]

It is a relevant problem in analysing power relations that groups modify their behaviour in anticipation of other actors' reactions. It may be that writers identify this as a capacity, yet then ignore it by only considering the actual exercise of power. This work at least aims to register such behaviour when actors directly express it as a reason for their actions. In this limited sense, the work accepts the reputational method against the decisional method. It, thus, again takes sides in a discussion that relates to the theories being tested. The claim of the defenders of the decisional method is that considering the reputation of power is too subjective.[159] Against this, this thesis aims to consider the actors' stated anticipated reactions in relation to the actual exercise of power by the actor considered powerful, such as, say, Rupert Murdoch.

A further traditional problem with power is intentionality. Power often has little meaning without the consequences of that power being attributable to a person or grouping. Yet,

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[156] Friedrich, Man 1963, 199, chap 11, Minkin, *Labour Party*: 46-7, Scott, John. 2001. *Power*. Cambridge: Polity.: 4.
[157] Scott, *Power*: 206.
[158] Wrong Dennis, Hume. 1979. *Power : its forms, bases and uses*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1979.: 7-8.
[159] *Ibid.*: 8-9.

intentionality, especially in such a potentially politically contentious area as press policy, is difficult to prove.[160] One point that the pluralists and their critics agree upon, and one that provides a potential problem, is that power is not static. It changes over time.[161] However, as we have seen, our analysis attempts to provide a dynamic analysis of the variations of power.[162]

Sources

The work combines the use of documentary analysis and interviews, as primary sources, with a range of secondary material to do this. The work also engages in a small amount of comparative research. The criteria used for assessing all the data include scrutinising its authenticity, credibility and representativeness.

The primary sources it employs are documentary analysis and interviews. Much of the data, as with many contemporary histories, comes from key institutional sources. These include the minutes of Labour's NEC and the submitted internal policy papers collated by Labour's research department, the minutes of the Parliamentary Labour Party and shadow cabinet, Labour Party and trade union annual conference transcripts, Hansard records of parliamentary debates, public inquiries, such as the Royal Commission on the Press, Green and White Papers and Government Bills.

This is essentially a work analysing Labour Party policy in the period from the early 1970s. Therefore, the key sources it uses are policy decisions and policy documents, as much as they are available. This might be thought to be a comparatively easy task. Up until 1991, it was. Labour produced a conference report, which outlined discussions and decisions made. It might not have been a complete verbatim report.[163] However, it accurately reported motions, conference decisions and some discussions. But in 1991,

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[160] Scott, *Power*: 2 and *Ibid.*: 4.
[161] Baratz Morton, S., and Peter Bachrach. 1962. "Two Faces of Power." *American Political Science Review* 56:947-52., reprinted in reprinted in Russell, Bertrand. 1995. *Power: a new social analysis*. London: Routledge, 1995.: 5.
[162] Minkin, *Exits*: 69.
[163] Minkin, *Exits*.

Labour decided to stop producing these reports. This termination had an added advantage for the leadership. One of the considerations of this work will be Labour's use of media management techniques. Abandoning conference reports gave the leadership the potential to present the conference as more 'on-message' than it actually was. Future assessments of the conference would now rely on the copious press releases produced by the Labour Party centrally and media reports of the conferences.

The importance of this, of course, is much larger than its effect on this work's methodology. However, it forces the author to rely much more heavily on press reports of subsequent party conferences than the source material. It makes it more difficult to analyse the conferences, save from information coloured by either Labour 'spin' or that of different sections of the media.

This refers to a more general point about the use of press reports as secondary sources. This work considers the question of press bias in reporting the Labour Party. It would be remiss not to recognise the same problems with academics uncritically sourcing press reports. Any scholar should be aware of the political colouration of the reporter involved, the editorial line of the paper and the newspaper group of which the title is part. Thus, this work attempts to verify such information using different sources.

Internal party documents are a useful source of primary material, also. The period from 1974 to 1983, particularly, saw the rise in NEC's influence in policymaking, for reasons we will consider in Chapters 3 and 4. The various study groups and sub-committees, which it set up to formulate press and media ownership policy, provide a key resource in this regard. Although the minutes of the NEC and the Home Policy Committee record only simple summaries of often-complex debates, they give some sense of the policy formation process. However, this is less true further up the decision-making chain. The author had access to minutes of the Parliamentary Labour Party in the period up to 1976 and the shadow cabinet for the time up to 1974. Yet, the report of debates in these is limited to the decisions made. This, to some extent, reflects the nature of the minutes as a whole. But it also indicates the relatively low importance placed on newspaper ownership

policy, for a party contending with more pressing issues such as EC membership and economic downturn. The records of parliamentary debates in Hansard were useful, in this and later periods, in contextualising the debates and illuminating the decisions.

As Freedman indicates with regard to broadcasting policy, the sub-committees betray slightly more detail. Even here, however, they do not detail the minutiae of the debates that probably took place. The most detailed source is the documents submitted to the groups' discussions, which have been used to enumerate positions.[164] The debates' complexity is often only indicated in the policy papers. Thus, these different sources' interrelationship provides the debates' context. Union and academic submissions to the committees have been particularly useful. The later period saw party policy formation more centralised around the leadership, as we shall see. Gaining access to Neil Kinnock's personal papers yielded unpublished information about the party's internal discussions regarding press ownership and media management policy. This illuminated decisions made. Their use also provides new insights into the relationship between the party leadership and the press owners.

Alongside those submitted to the party discussions, useful union documents included TUC conference and committee reports and those of the media unions, particularly their journals. However, one problem is that the control of the latter has been the subject of political battles. One aspect of this is that the NUJ's *Journalist*, which was a particularly fruitful source, has an elected editor. This is relevant to one of the thrusts of this work on press democracy. But it also has a methodological aspect. Other union journals have been assumed to articulate the line of the union leaderships generally. Yet, the *Journalist*, in the 1970s at least, occasionally questioned the 'top table'. This is one aspect of a wider point regarding Labour movement journals to be made in a moment.

To augment and contextualise these internal discussions, the author conducted a series of interviews with contributors. He also considered diaries and memoirs of various

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[164] Freedman, 2000: 21.

participants.[165] However, the use of such sources has its own problems. One is the time elapsed. As Freedman notes, there is a major difference between providing a contemporaneous diary record and recalling events many years later for a memoir. Memories fade, leading to fallibility; questioning credibility. This problem is greatly increased since press policy is rarely a central interest for politicians, for whom other areas may have been of a more direct or immediate relevance. Also, both memoirs and diaries can reflect the desires and political positions of the authors. Politicians are often involved in politically charged debates, which are likely to shape how they chronicle events.[166] Also, they can make claims for their own influence and importance, which can be coloured by self-aggrandisement, for example. Another problem of accounts by politicians and press insiders is that the pressure to appear entertaining and to sell may affect what is written. So, in analysing these, considerations of the memoirs' authenticity as well as their credibility come into play. The work attempts to establish their veracity by checking them against official minutes.[167]

A further potential difficulty comes with media cross-ownership. As has been noted, News Corporation's publishing arm, HarperCollins, has a history of spending large sums buying senior politicians' memoirs and has intervened to stop the publication of one such account.[168] This no more than highlights the possibility that what politicians write in their

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[165] Of the latter, of particular note are two sources provided by figures at different ends of the Labour Party spectrum. For those concerned with chronicling press policy and the Labour Party, the diaries of media activist, former cabinet minister and long-time NEC member, Tony Benn, are an important resource. Equally, numerous insights on press and media management, which are interwoven into this account of press ownership policy, have been gained from Phillip Gould's memoir and political tract *The Unfinished Revolution*. (Benn, Tony. 1989. *Office without power : diaries, 1968-72*. London: Arrow, 1989., Benn, Tony. 1990. *Against the tide : diaries, 1973-76*. London: Arrow Books., Benn, Tony. 1991. *Conflicts of interest. diaries 1977-80*. London: Arrow Books., Benn, Tony, and Ruth Winstone. 1992. *The end of an era : diaries 1980-90*. London: Hutchinson., Benn, Tony, and Ruth Winstone. 2002. *Free at last!: diaries 1991-2001*. London: Hutchinson., Gould, Philip. 1998. *The unfinished revolution : how the modernisers saved the Labour Party*. London: Little Brown. See also Freedman, 2000: 21).

[166] Freedman, 2000: 21. See also Wickham-Jones, Mark. 1996. *Economic strategy and the Labour Party : politics and policy-making, 1970-83*. New York: St. Martin's Press.: 9.

[167] Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 9.

[168] The book, thought to be controversial about the China government, was by Hong Kong governor Chris Patten. The *Daily Telegraph* published a News Corporation memo that revealed that it had ordered that the book rights be relinquished because there were fears concerning the book's "...negative aspects". (Quoted in Jones, Nicholas. 2000. *Sultans of spin : the media and the new Labour government*. London: Orion, 2000.: 200. See also Anon., 'Publisher to the Powerful', *Mother Jones*, May-June 1995, McChesney, *Rich media*: 116).

memoirs could be influenced by the awareness of their publishing company. For all these reasons, such sources in this work normally are used to express contrasting political positions in debates.[169]

An exception to this is when considering the highly contentious issue of the relationship between Tony Blair and Rupert Murdoch. When analysing this, one source the work uses is the little-cited diaries of Lord Wyatt.[170] Here the potential problem of self-aggrandisement and political bias are heightened.[171] Nevertheless, there are reasons to regard Wyatt's diaries as a legitimate insider source to consider the relationship between the Conservative Party and News Corporation. Wyatt had high-level connections among the Conservative establishment.[172] He had acted as a go-between for Murdoch in the past.[173] He was highly paid by News Corp. What is striking about the journals is that they are wonderfully indiscreet.[174] One possible reason for this openness was that Wyatt always wanted them to be published after his death. The other is that he was settling old scores from beyond the grave. However, although he felt let down by Murdoch, he was still loyal.[175] The diaries may well be coloured by Wyatt's own sense of importance. Yet, it is precisely because he was not so significant that important figures felt safe in imparting important information to the erstwhile Murdoch fixer.

Newspapers also provide a fruitful source of information about policy creation. The work draws on them extensively to chronicle New Labour's press policies. Ministers, spokespeople and advisers regularly brief journalists concerning forthcoming policies.[176]

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[169] Freedman, 2000: 21.
[170] Wyatt, Woodrow, and Sarah Curtis. 2000. *The journals of Woodrow Wyatt*. London: Macmillan. One later work that does cite Wyatt extensively is Greenslade, Roy. 2003. *Press Gang*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. However, Greenslade uses little of same information as this work
[171] By the end of his life, Lord Wyatt of Weeford may have been seen as a joke figure, no more than in his unstinting support for the failing John Major. (Wyatt) This, among other aspects, showed that he could make inaccurate assessments. He was, rightly, regarded as an establishment figure from another age.
[172] Major needed all the friends he could get and Wyatt was still relatively close to Margaret Thatcher. (Wyatt)
[173] This was particularly the case during the Wapping dispute. (Neil: 121).
[174] They provide an absorbing glimpse of the workings of the British political elite. Wyatt details deals made at secret meetings at country retreats involving members of the select few.
[175] He was agrieved by Murdoch's decision to support Blair and by the fact that his column's importance had been downgraded. Yet, this did not stop him supporting his employer and friend. (Wyatt).
[176] Freedman, 2000: 22.

Nevertheless, these could be subject to 'spin', including from advisers. The work has concentrated, therefore, on directly attributed interviews with elected Labour personnel to elaborate such policies. It has not relied on those sources for assessment of the effect of them. In addition, the work has considered Labour movement and left political periodicals from *Labour Weekly* to the *New Statesman* to *Tribune*. It has also utilised such journals that have particularly considered politics and the media, such as *New Left Review*, *New Socialist* and *Marxism Today*.

However, again, Labour movement journals have been used to represent differing political positions, rather than as representative of *the* Labour Party view or as presenting 'objective facts'. Any indications of representativeness have been judged by their authors' proximity to the main advocates of a particular position. Following Minkin, this work maintains a distrust of such sources. Authors and journals have been judged in terms of their history of accuracy and understanding of issues. In order to assess the validity of views expressed, again triangulation has been used – employing documentary analysis of official documentation and in-depth interviewing.[177]

The author interviewed politicians and Labour Party leaders involved with press ownership policy, former press policy advisors, civil servants involved in both press policy and media management, working journalists, media union officials and media academics and activists involved in Labour press policy formulation. Interviews lasted between one and two hours. He informally followed up of some points raised with some interviewees and some information from earlier interviewees was discussed with later correspondents to aid data validation.

All the interviews were useful. Yet, academics who were involved in debates on policy creation provided some of the most fruitful information. Interviews with leading Labour figures were as revealing for the assumptions that they made as for the information that was given. A problem with interviewing in this area, where the question of power and

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[177] Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 9, Minkin, *Exits*: 122-3.

influence is involved, is that of access. Some politicians involved refused to be interviewed. Others have been forthcoming.

Problems as to whether interview texts 'truly' represent events, beliefs and actions have been debated.[178] There is a concern with self-aggrandising interviewees; wanting to appear knowledgeable. In order to consider this, the same responsibilities of observational vigilance apply to interviewing. This work has attempted to locate interviewees in their political and historical context; to go beyond their self-idealisation to establish the validity of their information.[179] One way of achieving this was to conduct most interviews in the latter part of the research process, when much the groundwork and writing on the context and subject had already been done. Such a method had its drawbacks as well as advantages. The interviewer had to be open to considering a range of possible perceptions, so he was not mired in pre-conceived notions. Thus, because he was open to ideas from interviews, which challenged initial notions based on documentary sources, this led him to rewrite original completed drafts.

Also, taking Minkin's advice, the author was aware that the political area was sensitive when conducting interviews, prompting the need for imaginative research.[180] The interviewer, for instance, consciously attempted to create a neutral non-judgemental mood throughout the interviews. There was also an attempt to solicit politically contentious information through indirect questioning. Nevertheless, overall, the possible fallibility of interviews, with problems of memory lapse, for instance, was noted. Thus, again, triangulation has been employed with the data gained. Often interviews have been used to articulate opinions in the debates explored.

Generally, this work has not involved comparative research, although this is not to deny its benefits, especially in considering difference and diversity in policy creation between

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[178] May, Tim. 1997. *Social research : issues, methods and process*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997.: 128.
[179] Minkin, *Exits*: 124, 165.
[180] *Ibid.*:139, 167. See also Dexter Lewis, Anthony. 1970. *Elite and specialized interviewing*. Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press.

different countries and in developing general theories.[181] However, there has been some comparative research on press ownership policy among European social democratic governments to illustrate and contextualise the phenomenon of 'policy transfer' in Labour Party policy. However, in doing so, there has been an awareness of the differences in society and culture between different countries, making any simple policy transfer extremely problematic.[182] As in the work's scepticism concerning some of the more extreme claims made for globalisation theory, it identifies the particular and specific, as well as the general. So, for instance, the author considers whether there are counter-tendencies to economic globalisation in other European states.

Selection And Objectivity

All historians are selective. Indeed, they act as editors. They cannot embrace more than a fraction of the facts available.[183] Some of the selections in this work have been down to common sense.[184] For instance, it has not concentrated so heavily on internal party discussions around press policy while Labour was in government in the 1970s. This is because the key forum where new policy was often first debated, the NEC's media subcommittee, was not meeting. Nor has it analysed in such detail decisions of forums such as the NEC in the years of the Blair leadership because, as we shall see, this committee had less influence over party decision-making.[185]

This indicates a further problem, which compounds difficulties. That is that this work deals in such modern history. This means that certain sources are unavailable or have not been discovered. Moreover, it implies that such work occupies an uncertain space

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[181] May, Tim. 1997. *Social research : issues, methods and process*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997.: 186-9.

[182] Even language can bring problems of selectivity and thus bias. (*Ibid.*: 192).

[183] To use the gendered vocabulary of E.H. Carr's popular and influential book *What is History?*: "The historian distils from the experience of the past, or from so much of the experience of the past as is accessible to him, that part of which he recognises as amenable to rational explanation and interpretation, and from it draws conclusions, which may serve as a guide to action." (Carr Edward, Hallett, and R. W. Davies. 1987. *What is history?* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987.: 104).

[184] Freedman, 2000: 19.

[185] This was a more important consideration than the question of access under a 10-year-rule placed on such documents. Albeit partial and rather one-sided reports were available from elsewhere – i.e. *Tribune* and *Labour Left Briefing*.

between journalism and history. If, as it has been famously judged, it is too soon to assess the effects of the French Revolution, then how can any sense be made of an area that is so contemporaneous? The only defence on this point is that this work is inevitably partial and incomplete, but seeks to use the sources available to trace a shift in the Labour Party's ideas and the balance of power in the party in a time that has seen great change. A contemporary historian has one advantage, which the work has sought to exploit – she can contextualise written sources by interviews with living participants.[186]

Another complexity, which has been pointed out by Minkin, discussing Labour movement policy creation, is the tension between chronological and thematic narrative.[187] Although there is some attempt to 'tell a story' chronologically, there is a thematic strand also. Themes that are revisited through this thesis include the relationship between diversity and Labour representation, the conflict between left and right, the party's relationship to both of its constituent parts, especially the trade unions, and to external forces, such as the Conservative Party and business. Nevertheless, in order to make the account more readable, a chronological approach provides the overall 'architecture' of the work, whereas the consideration of power relations and the relationship of Labour policy to media models has been summed up at the conclusion of chapters and is revisited in the concluding chapter.

Thus, the motive for selection is press policy's relationship to such issues, rather than such determinants as press coverage or the frequency of references in Parliament to such questions.[188] More latterly, the work has delved into the area of press management and political communications to test the theory that to consider press policy one needs to consider the question of Labour representation. However, press management is not the subject of this thesis and thus is not a continuous theme of it.

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[186] Freedman, 2000: 17-18.
[187] Minkin, *Exits*, Minkin, *Labour Party*: xv.
[188] Freedman, 2000: 19.

In making such selections, the work tentatively sees some causal relationships in the development of Labour's policy, which may be seen as over-imposed by the author.[189] Nevertheless, as Carr puts it, to "...describe something as a mischance is a favourite way of exempting oneself from the tiresome obligation to investigate its cause...". To look for causality, is not to accept complete inevitability, but neither to reduce history to an explanation of what Carr describes as the "...'might-have-been' school of thought...".[190] This is accepted here, notwithstanding what has been noted regarding 'non-decisions'.

This work has attempted to treat all sources with a combination of empathy and detachment. However, the objectives of research can be coloured by one's political stance. One major problem with this is that "... understandings become embedded in an unquestioned frame of reference", as Minkin puts it.[191] Employing a range of formal research methods that are clear and open is one way of challenging embedded understandings. Nevertheless, again following Carr, an objective historian is not somebody who just gets his or her facts right or someone who believes in total objectivity. Indeed, as he argues, such a scholar is one who rejects the possibility of such a concept. Instead, to approach objectivity partly depends on being self-consciously aware of one's own position in society and one's relation to the history that is being written.[192] In that sense, seemingly paradoxically, openly accepting that one has 'biases' and commitments is one aspect of seeking objectivity.

The next chapter will attempt to employ the methodology outlined when it considers the debates over Labour's press policy in the early 1970s.

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[189] *Ibid.*: 23.
[190] Carr: 96, 102, 107.
[191] Minkin, *Exits*: 21, 136-7.
[192] Carr: 123, 139.

3. Concerns and Study: Party Debates Up to 1974

INTRODUCTION

In 1967, Prime Minister Harold Wilson strongly rejected calls for further Government intervention to preserve press diversity. He told the 1967 Granada Television Awards that "...there would be the most appalling risks in Government intervention... It is not only a question of what would be done but of what some might think was being done."[193] Nevertheless, by 1974, the Labour Party had produced a document which explicitly identified the "...need for intervention...". It advocated a "...radical restructuring..." of the press market to aid diversity and provide some industrial democracy within newspapers.[194]

What had happened in the interim? Appendix 2 to Chapter 1 outlined the prelude to the period we are considering. The time from 1945 saw radical party pressure for reform to deal with press market failure ameliorated by the Labour leadership. This occurred in struggles where the pressure for increased diversity was linked with, but at times in contradiction to, Labour representation. This chapter will argue that this tension between diversity and Labour representation was less clear in the debates on the press in the early 1970s. Yet, divisions were still apparent. The chapter will look at the political background and the first direct consideration of the mass media conducted by the party by its Communications study group. It will argue that the rising Labour new left combined with representatives of a resurgent trade union movement and sections of a more hesitant right on that body to push for structural press reform, facing a reluctant Labour Party leadership. What brought them together were concerns for Labour movement representation, particularly to give the unions a fairer press. The trade unionists and some others saw this as an end in itself. However, the chapter shall argue that other forces centred primarily around the Labour new left on the working party were

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[193] Quoted in Thomas, Harford, and Institute International Press. 1967. *Newspaper crisis : a study of developments in the national press of Britain 1966-67*. Zurich: International Press Institute.: 67-8.
[194] Labour Party. 1974. *The people and the media*. London: The Labour Party.: 24-5.

also heavily concerned with broader diversity and democratising ownership of the press. The chapter will conclude by exploring the influence of unions, MPs and academics in the creation of the radical discussion paper *The people and the media*, produced by the Labour Party in 1974.

As we shall see, in this and other chapters, some of the policies Labour considered were adaptations of those enacted by other states. This is particularly true of those to aid diversity. 'Policy transfer', or as Richard Rose tends to describe it, 'lesson-drawing' is a feature of state policy-making. Such policy transfers can happen over time and space. We can adapt this idea to consider Labour Party policy adoption. We are considering national government policy transfers over space. Factors to consider before attempting such transfers include assessing whether the policies would be acceptable in their new national climates. In our adaptation, we are going to consider their acceptability by the Labour Party in its policy formation. The theory suggests that proximity is expected to define policy transfer, but this proximity is variable. Such factors include similarity in values, which would be expected to be a key factor for political parties. Among other transfer considerations are whether they are seen to be politically acceptable and technically feasible.[195] The appendix to this chapter shall put this policy transfer into context by exploring some of the European schemes which Labour thinkers looked to, which showed how the possibilities they were considering were turned into reality.

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[195] Rose, Richard. 1993. *Lesson-drawing in public policy: a guide to learning across time and space.* Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House.

New Pressures on Labour: The Labour new left and union radicalisation[196]

By the late 1960s, the post-war settlement was collapsing and, with this, there was a crisis of Keynesian demand management, which the Labour Party had increasingly relied on, to the exclusion of public ownership.[197] There was also an explosion of industrial militancy, as hostility to Labour government wage restraint grew. This combined with a wave of community action. The Labour government was ejected from office in 1970.[198] While this crisis provided for a new right reaction that we will consider later, it also led to a Labour new left advance and union radicalisation.

The British New Left's most organised element was formed in 1956.[199] With Raymond Williams at the forefront, it was concerned with the media from the outset. While some original participants refused to become involved in the Labour Party, a sympathetic internal current helped fill the policy political and economic vacuum created by the Keynesian crisis and the Wilson government's failure.[200]

Politically, the New Left wished to democratise the state. It wanted to transform the party and make the conference sovereign as a prelude to that. Tony Benn was the tribune of this new movement.[201] Extending political democracy through press reform was part of this same process.

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[196] In considering this, this work is influenced by the notion of Leo Panitch and Colin Leys of a Labour new left, also considered by writers such as Callaghan. (Panitch and Leys, Callaghan, J. 2000. *The Retreat of Social Democracy*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.: esp Chapter 3).

[197] Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 34-8.

[198] Panitch and Leys: 1, 5, 19-21.

[199] The uproar following the publication of the Khrushchev speech was a catalyst. For various assessments of the British New Left see Kenny, Michael. 1995. *The First New Left*. London: Lawrence & Wishart., Chun, Lin. 1993. *The British New Left*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press., Widgery, David. 1976. "The Double Exposure: Suez and Hungary." in *The Left In Britain 1956-68*, edited by David Widgery. Harmondsworth: Penguin., McCann, Gerald. 1997. *Theory and History: The Political Thought of E. P.* Thompson. Aldershot: Ashgate., Anderson, Perry. 1980. *Arguments Within English Marxism*. London: Verso., Archer, R. (Ed.). 1989. *Out of Apathy, Voices of the New Left 30 Years On*. London: Verso. and Young, Nigel. 1977. *An Infantile Disorder? The Crisis and Decline of the New Left*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

[200] Panitch and Leys: 2-4, Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 42-3. See also Kenny: 42, 133-4. Defining this current as new left indicates its diversity, in a similar fashion to how Wickham-Jones latterly defined it. (Wickham-Jones, Mark. 2004. 'The New Left', in Plant, Raymond et. al. eds., *The Struggle for Labour's Soul*. London: Routledge, 24-46: 25).

[201] Panitch and Leys: 39.

Economically, while some of Labour right had looked to the Scandinavian system and were reluctant to nationalise, the New Left answered the Keynesian failure by calling for public shareholding. They demanded a national enterprise board, which had a resonance in the national printing corporation we shall consider later.[202] Their argument echoed the critique of oligopolisation in Chapter 1. The British economy was now dominated by oligopolistic concentration. Keynesian solutions were thus largely ineffectual in controlling the economy, faced with multinational domination.[203] This gave a renewed impetus to critiques of press monopolisation.

However, like the original New Left before it, the Labour new left also saw that a problem of state control of 'Old Labour's' past, to use the modern terminology, was the lack of industrial democracy.[204] Leading Labour new left economist Stuart Holland advocated this as a counterbalance to a potentially overweening state.[205] Discussions on involving those in the newspaper industry were part of this debate.

Support for workers' control had enjoyed a renaissance in the 1960s and early 1970s both outside and in the party.[206] New inspiration for this came from 'work-ins', which

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[202] The board would act as a state holding company channelling public investment and overseeing planning agreements with private industry. This was a feature of both Labour's *Programme 1973* and its manifesto the following year. (Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 5, 61-4, 66-8, Thompson, *Political economy*: 233). For the argument that this did not represent simple nationalisation, however, see Holland, Stuart. 2004. 'Ownership, Planning and Markets', in Plant, Raymond et. al. eds., *The Struggle for Labour's Soul*. London: Routledge: 163-186.

[203] Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 55-9, 79-80, 126, Thompson, *Political economy*: 198-9, 231, Callaghan, *Retreat*: 58-9. This concern with monopoly power was widespread within the party, and shared by some of the now defensive revisionist right. Roy Jenkins was one who conceded the need for an extension of public ownership at this point. But he did not envisage it to be embarked on on the same scale as did the left. (Thompson, *Political economy*: 219-222, 226). This analysis provided the left with a critique of what became known as globalisation long before the Labour right adopted the term. A similar point has been latterly made by Wickham-Jones. (Wickham-Jones, New Left: 36).

[204] Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 41-2, 83.

[205] Thompson, *Political economy*: 203, 209. As one speaker who to become an prominent left MP, Brian Sedgemore, told the 1971 party conference, the mistake of 1945 was that the nationalised industries were "...centralised bureaucracies...[with] managements responsible neither to workers, consumers or Parliament." (Quoted in Panitch and Leys: 73).

[206] Industrial democracy had been supported in party conference and TUC congress resolutions in the 1960s and had been the subject of a party report. (Hatfield, Michael. 1978. *The house the Left built : inside Labour policy-making, 1970-75*. London: Gollancz.: 54, Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 68-9).

provided positive proof of workers' capability in managing their own enterprises.[207] While the demand for industrial democracy became policy, commitments made in Labour documents were mostly vague. The Labour left were not clear where workers' autonomy ended and state planning began.[208]

The Labour new left was bolstered by another important development. Union militancy continued growing in the 1970s, developing a new left-wing trade union leadership, which backed industrial democracy.[209] This increased New Left influence in the party. The new union leadership challenged 'social democratic centralism', which had strengthened post-war right-wing rule. It also created an opening for the dissenting New Left voices.[210]

Community-based New Left activists joined local parties as control by right-wing cliques collapsed. The left also used its increasing presence on the National Executive Committee (NEC) from the mid-1960s onwards as a power base. Its sub-committees became part of the policymaking process after 1970. The left concentrated its energy on these 80-plus committees.[211] Outside co-optees, including academics, had equal status with the PLP members on the committees. And NEC members, not the Shadow Cabinet, chaired them. One co-opted academic, Holland, was the main architect of the left's

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[207] This had been preceded by a rise in grassroots trades union confidence. (Thompson, *Political economy*: 207). For the more radical proponents around the Institute for Workers' Control (IWC), this would lead to a planned system of worker self-management as a basis for a socialist economy. The IWC was an organisation that had set up in 1968 and was associated both with the New Left and the Labour left. (Thompson, *Political economy*: 207, 212). For Labour right thinkers this meant letting workers have some influence on how enterprises were run, but not control of them. *Programme 1973* called for direct worker representation on new company supervisory boards and joint control committees composed of worker representatives and management. (Thompson, *Political economy*: 222-4, 226).

[208] Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 69-70, 185-7. There was also a concern that planning proposals should originate from the bottom up. (*Ibid.*: 68). A slightly more harsh assessment of this is provided in Wickham-Jones, New Left: 42. One aspect of this new approach was that decisions on which firms to be nationalised would reflect discussions among the companies' workers. (Panitch and Leys: 80).

[209] Although those associated with the Labour new left went beyond the union leader's conceptions. (Panitch and Leys: 21-2, 56-9, Thompson, *Political economy*: 209-12. See also Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 117-8).

[210] There was now the "...view that radical socialist activists were part of the labour movement's family rather than its enemies, as the revisionists and right-wing leaders had for so long insisted". (Panitch and Leys: 21-6).

[211] Panitch and Leys: 26-38, 66.

economic strategy.[212] As we shall see it was a New Left academic who had most influence on press policy.

THE COMMUNICATIONS STUDY GROUP

The Communications subcommittee was established in 1972 with press representation – of the unions rather than the party – much on the mind of radical activists. Sections of the Labour movement had become increasingly hostile to what they regarded as a sustained press assault on the more militant unions.[213] The study circle built on the discussions on media reform that the Labour Party had periodically conducted and also the interest in media policy among left academics, which had blossomed in the 1960s.[214] This is not to say, however, that media reform was the most pressing concern for those in the Labour Party at this time.[215]

Concerns about press oligopolisation and barriers to market entry had been raised in an Advertising sub-committee, which had reported in 1971.[216] However, it had counselled against extensive intervention. Nevertheless, the report indicated that "... drastic action..." might be needed in the future.[217] Demands for just this sort of action came from some involved in the Communications study group set up by the NEC's Home Policy in May 1972.[218]

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[212] Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 118-22.
[213] Curran and Seaton: 299-300.
[214] See O'Malley, Tom and Soley, Clive. 2000. *Regulating the press*. London: Pluto Press.: 72.
[215] The pages of *Tribune* only saw sporadic articles or letters indicating any concern with press ownership in this period, although there was more prominence given to this question in *Labour Weekly*, where its journalist Martin Linton was vocal on this question. The minutes of the Shadow Cabinet also reveal nothing in the way of discussion.
[216] Home Policy Sub-Committee Advertising Report, December 1971, Labour Party Research Document RD 201: 52-3, 62-4.
[217] This would be needed for "...the survival of a vigorous and independent press". (Labour, Party. 1972. *Advertising*. London: Labour Party.: 49, Home Policy Sub-Committee Advertising Report, December 1971, Labour Party RD 201: 67).
[218] A direct example of this call to action was from one key participant in the Communications study group, chairman of the Labour Newspaper Group Eric Moonman. He described the report on advertising as "...very disappointing". The former MP said of its discussion on 'drastic action' that: "Such pious hopes are not enough; the Labour Party must now produce definite policy and some concrete proposals on this subject." (Moonman, Eric. 1972. 'Future of the Press – does anyone care?' *Labour Weekly* June 9 1972.). See also Home Policy Committee Communications: Final Report Background Note, RES 59/1974,: 1. It

The working party was set up to guide media policy creation. But it did not do this directly. Its report was never voted on. However, it was significant in that it influenced later policy development and, perhaps more importantly, it prefigured a host of debates that were to rumble on in the party for years afterwards.

Like other committees, its membership included MPs and trades unionists and sympathetic academics, but in this case, it also incorporated journalists.[219] Labour's research secretary Terry Pitt, who was not on the left, initiated the committee.[220] The formal basis for serving on this committee was that these were "...people in the movement whose interest in communication is known".[221] James Curran describes the political character of the people Pitt brought together as generally supportive of the Labour leadership.[222] Yet, a pointer to the direction it was going to take was that the man who was becoming the figurehead of the revolt, Tony Benn, chaired it for most of its existence.

From its start, the working group debated policy on how to expand plurality and democracy in the newspaper industry. The study group's overwhelming emphasis, if not that elsewhere in the Labour Party, was to provide a press required for political democracy. The less openly-contested debate, but a question nonetheless evident in

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was, indeed, the first direct study of its kind by the party. (Labour Party NEC Home Policy Committee: Communications, RD 324/April 1972:1).

[219] Home Policy Committee Communications: Final Report Background Note, RES 59/1974, Home Policy Committee Note on Communications Meeting, RD370/June 1972, Minutes of the Second Home Policy Committee on Communications, 10 January 1973, Minutes of the Fourth Home Policy Committee on Communications, March 8 1973, Minutes of the Fifth Home Policy Committee on Communications, 10 May 1973, Minutes of the Seventh Home Policy Committee on Communication, 3 April 1974, Minutes of the Eighth Home Policy Committee on Communications, 30 April 1974, O'Malley and Soley: 72.

[220] Pitt's attitude to the New Left has been disputed. Wickham-Jones identifies Terry Pitt as sympathetic to the left. (Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 121). Curran sees that Terry Pitt "...was actively involved in stopping the left. But what he was absorbing was that the culture of the Labour movement at that time, which was pro-industrial democracy and pro-social democratic of the conventional sort which was taking place in Scandinavia. Indeed, Terry Pitt actually gave me a book which was about the Swedish press at that time and was very impressed by it. And he also gave me another book about post-war nationalisation, which was a sort of social democratic argument that you didn't nationalise the companies, you nationalised their functions."

[221] Home Policy Committee: Communications, RD324/April 1972: 1. Curran suggests that, aside from those who "...had to be on..." others invited were friends of Pitt. (Curran interview).

[222] Curran interview.

papers submitted to the committee, was over what emphasis to place on Labour representation. We shall consider this first.

LABOUR REPRESENTATION IN THE PRESS

According to one of the participants, James Curran, the concern to develop a Labour movement press and a left press "...was always the subtext..." on the committee.[223] Another, then *Labour Weekly* journalist Martin Linton remembers that: "...the issue of what we could do about it was one everyone wanted to explore".[224]

Some of those more associated with the New Left academics were calling for a left press. Others, particularly those connected with the Old Left trade unionists, were more forthright in voicing the demand for Labour movement papers.[225] They saw the Labour movement – and the unions in particular – under attack. The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) general secretary Ken Morgan described the TUC annual congress as conducting an "...annual swipe at the media..." at this time.[226] And media union

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[223] "So in as far as *The people and the media* was trying to restructure the market, it was in order to create a space where these sorts of publications could be launched and have the chance to survive. Diversity was a code. But it was a libertarian code. It was saying we want more left publications, but also that they should be publications of all different hues. So it was genuine. It was genuine in the sense that it was committed to diversity. But was also a code for saying left publications." (Curran interview).

[224] "There was only one argument and that was we were put at the huge disadvantage by the overwhelmingly Conservative nature of the press." (Author interview with Martin Linton MP, Wednesday July 18 2001). Linton was a journalist on the *Daily Mail* and *Financial Times*, before joining *Labour Weekly* in 1971. He left Labour Party newspaper in 1979 and worked on the *Daily Star*, before becoming a journalist on *The Guardian*, where he remained until 1997. He has been a Labour MP since then. He is the half-Swedish author of a book on Swedish socialism and the work *Was It The Sun Wot Won It?*, among other publications. Anon. 2000. *Dod's parliamentary companion.* Roth, Andrew, and Byron Criddle. 2000. *1997-2002 parliamentary profiles*. London: Parliamentary Profiles.: 1311-1313).

[225] Curran confirmed that the trade unionists tended to be more concerned at this time about specifically promoting a Labour movement press. The new left academics were, in the main, pressing for publications which would be to the left of the official Labour Party press. (Curran interview).

[226] Trades Union Congress. Annual, Conference. 1972. *Report of the 104th annual Trades Union Congress : held in The Dome, Brighton, 4th-8th September, 1972*. London: T.U.C.: 533. Morgan was more sceptical about more general claims of bias than were other speakers at the congress – arguing that the standards of reporting of industrial affairs were "... higher than in any other country in the world...". Yet, he was in a minority. (Trades Union Congress. Annual, Conference. 1971. *Report of the 103rd annual Trades Union Congress : held in the Opera House, Blackpool, 6th-10th September, 1971*. London: T.U.C.: 594. See also National Union of Journalists, 1972. *National Union of Journalists Annual Report 1971-2*. London: National Union of Journalists.: 21 and 'Mass media 'bias' probe: a warning', *The Journalist*, October 1971: 4).

representatives themselves were taking the swipes.[227] Richard Briginshaw, general secretary of the printers' union NATSOPA, in 1972, was typically forthright. He saw newspapers had the "...ultimate interest to bash the unions and make them the scapegoats for every political, financial and economic ill the country suffers".[228] The response of the 1971 congress was to call for a public inquiry into media ownership and control and resolved to set up machinery to monitor the union's treatment in the media.[229]

The discussions in the Labour Party echoed this bias claim.[230] At the study group's first meeting, a majority of trade unionists on the working group saw newspaper anti-union bias as the major policy problem.[231] One participant, who was particularly concerned about this question, Linton, rejected universal subsidies to the press that we shall consider in a moment, out of a concern for Labour representation. These would only help the more profitable and predominantly anti-Labour press, he suggested, merely "...feeding the mouth that bites you".[232] Nevertheless, reflecting an underlying tension between diversity and Labour representation, this viewpoint did not go unchallenged. The future Arts minister, MP Hugh Jenkins, argued that the general approach to media should be to put diversity uppermost.[233]

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[227] For instance, R.T. Hutchings, of the Association of Broadcasting Staff (ABS), particularly singled out newspapers for attack. He argued that: "The Press clearly is totally unbalanced against the trade union movement... In many papers editorial opinions are entirely predictable, and in the process of editing some editors use scissors that seem totally incapable of travelling along balanced lines." (TUC 1971: 592).

[228] Anon. 1972. 'Briginshaw bashes trade union bashers', *Labour Weekly*, August 11, 1972.

[229] It passed a motion that noted the "...serious criticisms made from time to time of the way in which the activities of the trade union movement and of individual unions are described and represented by the Press and in radio and television broadcasts...". (Trades Union Congress Economic Committee, 'The Newspaper Industry', December 13, 1972: 1).

[230] See, for instance, Geoffrey Goodman, 'Quality and Diversity In The Press' RD 651/February 1973: 3.

[231] Home Policy Committee Note on Communications Meeting, RD370/June 1972: 2.

[232] Martin Linton 'Policies for the Press', RD 536/January 1973: 2.

[233] "The strategy should have as its first and main objective the maintenance and, where necessary, the creation, of variety of outlets. That is to say, the object should be not to maintain the pretence of that objectivity and fairness is possible, but to create the genuine basis for a wide variety of sources, some of which may maintain a pose of objectivity but many of which will be openly biased and partisan. The strategy should not be to encourage socialist media but to create a framework within which such media can and will emerge." (Hugh Jenkins 'A Framework for a Communications Policy' RD 597/February 1973:1). Hugh Jenkins was MP for Putney from 1964-79, a member of the Arts Council from 1968-71 and Arts minister from 1974-76. He was created a peer in 1981. (Baron Hugh Jenkins archives, London School of Economics, Anon. 2002. *House of Lords Biographies*, London: PMS Publications).

Outside the working group, it was more clearly argued that the main aim of any new ownership legislation would be the promotion of a Labour movement press – and diversity and democracy was a secondary, if important, consideration. This was a unifying theme of both right and left.[234] *Labour Weekly*, a newspaper produced by the Labour Party that had been set up in 1971, was running a campaign 'The Case For A Labour Press' to push for newspapers directly linked to the Labour and trade union movement, similar to those in Norway and Sweden, as we shall note in the appendix to this chapter.[235]

As part of that, Linton argued for a Labour press on the basis that, unlike the then Labour-supporting *Sun* and *Daily Mirror*, a Labour press would actively campaign for radical policies, along with enhancing diversity. Reflecting a view which would influence discussions on Labour representation by the means of press management in 1990s, he viewed that the press was involved in agenda-setting – "... it does not pick the winner but it picks the battlefield". A Labour press would help shift politics on to a more radical agenda, with a more left wing consensus, as there was in Norway and Sweden.[236] It was argued in the newspaper that the working group's interest in enabling groupings to have access to the media would mean promoting Labour papers to broaden choice.[237]

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[234] "There was a rhetoric, which was mobilised by right and left – a kind of ritualistic rhetoric. How best could you appeal to the common denominator of the Labour Party in public speeches? You could by attacking the capitalist press, because if there was one thing the left and right had in common, there was a feeling that they had a bad press. They were faced by, essentially, a conservative enemy. So Roy Hattersley would routinely attack the press, just as speakers from the left... So it was part of the ritual of the Labour movement." (Curran interview).

[235] A double page spread in *Labour Weekly* in June 1972 attested to this. (Linton, Martin. 1972. 'The Case for a Labour Press', Hansen, Bjorn. 1972. 'Where Labour has a good press', *Labour Weekly*, June 9 1972, Anon. 1972. 'Case for a Labour Press: Where the dream is a reality', *Labour Weekly*, June 30 1972). Linton, in the newspaper, expressed concerns regarding the narrowness of press ownership, both in terms of the numbers of firms involved and in the politics of the chairs of those companies. Interestingly, for what was to follow, Rupert Murdoch was the only proprietor with sympathies that were thought by some in the Labour Party to be left-of-centre at the time. (Linton, The Case). It should be remembered that in this period, as it would be again, the *Sun* was a Labour-backing paper. Labour regarded it as important to keep its support. The *Sun* had been created on the death of the *Daily Herald* and had been Labour-supporting. It came out for Labour in 1970, before switching to support the Conservatives in the 1974 election.

[236] Linton, *The Case*. It can be debated whether the basis of the radical agenda in these countries was so solely directly determined by the social democratic press.

[237] Anon. 1972. 'Case for a Labour Press: Where the dream is a reality', *Labour Weekly*, June 30 1972.

A Press for Democracy

Few on the committee had so exclusive a commitment, however. A major concern for many on the group at this stage was also to provide a press required for political democracy.

The background paper, produced for the group's first meeting, had identified dissatisfaction with the media on precisely this count. It identified many of the concerns we saw in Chapter 1 as affecting political democracy. That is, newspaper ownership was becoming more concentrated, the number of newspapers was shrinking and advertising's operation led to bifurcation.[238] The committee's most influential contribution also made this concern explicit. Its author was an academic associated with the New Left, who would have a crucial influence on Labour press policy throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s – James Curran.[239]

As for ways to provide for political democracy, the study group identified ownership concentration and commercial domination as key areas to be tackled at its first meeting.[240] Those involved would dispute how these problems would be confronted. At the working group's second meeting, the discussion divided on the methods to provide press plurality, a debate that set the tone for subsequent gatherings. The divisions were between those wanting more statist structures to provide for this and those advocating less direct government involvement – with some entwining them with demands for

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[238] Home Policy Committee: Communications, RD324/April 1972: 2-3,5.

[239] Curran's aim was to : "...create a free press, independent of both political censorship and the market distortions that have led to monopoly contraction and discrimination against minority interests; a varied press because greater diversity is essential if the cross-section of conflicting views, tastes and interests in the community is to be adequately represented and catered for; and a democratic press, democratically managed by workers within the industry and rendered more accountable to the community it serves." (James Curran, 'The Newspaper Press: Salvage or Save?', RD662/March 1973: 1).

[240] Those involved were concerned that the public didn't appreciate the "...the extent to which the country was denied a free communications industry...", for instance where a small number of proprietors owned the vast majority of the press. (Home Policy Committee Note on Communications Meeting, RD370/June 1972: 2). Another concern being expressed in the Labour Party press at this time was that distributors were hampering diversity by excluding 'underground' papers on commercial grounds. One senior MP, Tom Driberg, saw this as censorship by other means. (Driberg, Tom. 1972. 'Burying the Underground', *Labour Weekly*, April 7 1972).

Labour representation.[241] The different views can be reduced to four basic positions on how to advance plurality. We shall return to a discussion on the merits of some of the various schemes in Chapter 4.

PLURAL VIEWS: DIVERSITY AND PLURALITY

The State Solution

The state solution advanced called for a National Printing Corporation as a government holding company. This was of the sort associated with models of public service, those advanced by some Marxists and also Keane and similar to other non-media statist schemes Labour and the New Left supported at the time. This solution was backed by the National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants (NATSOPA) union, a TUC report considered it favourably and one influential study group member Geoffrey Goodman consistently advocated it. He argued that the market on its own could not provide the range of newspapers for a democracy and the state should intervene directly.[242]

This National Printing Corporation would discriminate in favour of weaker newspapers by giving state aid. It would buy printing plant – at minimum the presses and assets of newspapers set to merge or close.[243] In the variant proposed to the working group, it would contract out the production of newspapers. Indeed, some on the working group

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[241] Minutes of the Second Home Policy Committee on Communications, 10 January 1973: 2.

[242] Trades Union Congress Economic Committee, 'The Newspaper Industry', December 13, 1972: 16-7, Geoffrey Goodman, 'Quality and Diversity In The Press' RD 651/February 1973: 3. Geoffrey Goodman had worked on the *Manchester Guardian* and the *News Chronicle*. He had been industrial correspondent on the *Daily Herald* and the pre-Murdoch *Sun* before becoming the *Daily Mirror*'s Industrial Editor in 1969. He was also appointed Assistant Editor on the newspaper in 1976. He headed the government's Counter-Inflation Publicity Unit from 1975 to 1976. He also served on the 1977 Royal Commission on the Press where he was the co-author of the Minority Report, which advocated this solution. He had previously been a member of the Labour Party Committee on Industrial Democracy. (Anon. 1979. *Who's Who*. London : A. & C. Black.: 967, Morgan Kenneth, O. 1997. *Callaghan : a life*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.: 627).

[243] Linton, Policies: 2, Eric Moonman, 'Saving The Press', RD 532/January 1973:1.

saw this operating in a similar way to how commercial broadcasters were subject to contract, in a public service-style model.[244]

One proponent, Linton, saw that dealing with the "...two problems – of access and finance..." were key to Labour policies on the press. To combat these twin difficulties, the corporation would make it easier for new publications to enter the market and it would prop up smaller circulation newspapers' finances.[245] Subsidy and contract renewal would be dependent on circulation. If the newspaper failed to rise above a certain circulation, its contract would not be renewed. If it achieved a higher circulation, the subsidy element would be cut.[246]

However, two key problems with such a proposal were that, firstly, it was a costly way of addressing a problem of press print capacity shortage that did not exist.[247] Also, it did not deal with a major barrier to newspaper market entry. The obstacle was not production costs, which a National Printing Corporation would effectively subsidise. It was advertising. As we shall consider further in the next chapter, such a scheme failed to deal with bipolarisation.

Moreover, press dependence on state funding left it prone to government control. A key problem was that of a public service press. A printing corporation, by deciding between different leases, would be exercising an explicitly political judgement. Unlike in broadcasting, it is accepted that the press editorialises. Thus, by choosing one newspaper for subsidy over another, the corporation would be affecting the newspaper industry's whole political alignment. It was unclear who should make such political choices, which would also entail the use of public money. The NUJ was among opponents of a National Printing Corporation for this reason at this time.[248] This question would also be entwined with the question of Labour representation. There would be a potential pressure to

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[244] Moonman, Saving: 1, Linton, Policies: 2, Geoffrey Goodman, 'Quality and Diversity In The Press' RD 651/February 1973: 3.
[245] Linton, Policies: 2-4.
[246] *Ibid.*
[247] Sixth Meeting on Communications, 'Communications: Draft Report': 25-6.
[248] George Viner, 'NUJ Policy on Concentration of Ownership', RD 647/February 1973: 8.

support those newspapers favourable to Labour. We shall see in Chapter 5 that this problem re-emerged when more radical public service models were considered after 1979.

Newsprint Subsidy and Advertising Tax

An interventionist alternative to this, which would be less explicitly statist was across-the-board control of newsprint prices, possibly financed by an advertising levy. The NUJ advocated this scheme, where a central agency would sell it at a subsidised rate. The TUC's report on the newspaper industry also favourably regarded this scheme, which was similar to that which operated during World War II. The report thought that it would stop newspapers going out of business, reducing diversity, and it would encourage new entrants deterred by the cost of newsprint.[249] The problem with such a scheme, however, was that it would either be costly and subsidise the most profitable companies or be ineffectual.

Alternatively, many on the study group preferred an advertising tax on all media to provide a newsprint subsidy that favoured less profitable publications. The advertising tax would seek to tackle the problem of bifurcation. Such a tax commanded broad support among those interested in media reform, who were not necessarily on the New Left, including some whose interest was primarily in Labour representation. A key member of the committee, Eric Moonman, in an example of policy transfer, looked to other European states, particularly the Scandinavian countries, for inspiration. He saw a similar system was in operation to challenge concentration, as we shall see in the appendix to this chapter.[250] The former MP, after the second meeting of the group, felt

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[249] Minutes of the Second Home Policy Committee on Communications, 10 January 1973: 2, W.R. Richardson, 'Proposals On The Press', RD 632/February 1973: 3, George Viner, 'Comments on RD 324', RD 529/January 1973: 2, Viner, NUJ Policy: 3, Viner, George. 1973. 'Primary need 'to link all research', *Journalist*, February 1973, Trades Union Congress Economic Committee, 'The Newspaper Industry', December 13, 1972: 18.

[250] Eric Moonman was a lecturer in industrial relations and a researcher and writer on management. He was a MP for Billericay from 1966-70 and for Basildon from 1974. He defected from the Labour Party in 1984. (Anon., 1979. *Who's who*, London: A. & C. Black.: 1762, Stenton, Michael, and Stephen Lees. 1981. *Who's who of British members of Parliament : a biographical dictionary of the House of Commons based on annual volumes of 'Dod's parliamentary companion' and other sources*. Brighton: Harvester Press.:

that committee's majority supported his proposal, which was for a newsprint subsidy financed by a cross-media tax.[251] Advocates indicated that such a levy would have to be on all advertising so that advertisers would not switch to other media not bound by the levy. Moonman was among those who viewed such aid as subject to a number of conditions. Subsidies would have to be based on technical and financial, rather than cultural or political, grounds.[252] The aid, again, would reduce as profits were made. Publications aided had to be in genuine need, be technically efficient and primarily composed of news and opinion, as opposed to entertainment. Papers that were part of a group would receive a reduced subsidy.[253]

In addition, the advocates of this scheme called for a separate launch fund for new publications, which would have to fulfil the same criteria as those seeking the newsprint subsidy. Its object was to advance diversity.[254] A board independent of the state, which included a broader range of representatives, would oversee this.[255]

However, a key question would be how such a scheme would be funded. Reducing funding as paper sales increased was objected to because publishers wanting to save money could deliberately cut off distribution to more costly areas. Those deprived of their newspapers would blame the Labour government.[256] Yet, this could have been dealt with by having a medium cut-off point for subsidy, because of the low marginal cost of extra sales. Another suggestion was to allocate on the basis of the ratio between advertising and editorial content. This was Moonman's preferred option.[257] Some of the scheme's provisions were also open to the objection that its criteria were subjective, such

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263, Roth, Andrew, and Byron Criddle. 2000. *1997-2002 parliamentary profiles*. London: Parliamentary Profiles.:1527).

[251] Moonman, *Future*, Eric Moonman, 'The Press: A Draft Programme', RD 655/March 1973: 3-4., Linton, Policies: 2.

[252] W.R. Richardson, 'Proposals On The Press', RD 632/February 1973: 9.

[253] Moonman, *The Press*: 4. See also Richardson, Proposals: 3.

[254] Moonman, *The Press*: 4.

[255] This did not necessarily mean democratic participation. While Moonman and Richardson saw the body as comprising of representatives from the industry, unions and newspaper publishers, as well as such bodies as the TUC, CBI, universities and women's groups, they did not stipulate how such a body would be selected. In fact, the only indication of this is that Moonman suggested that the government would appoint the 'independent' chair. (Moonman, *The Press*: 4-5, Richardson, Proposals: 9).

[256] James Curran, 'The Newspaper Press: Salvage or Save?', RD662/March 1973: 30-2.

[257] Moonman, *Saving*: 2, Moonman, *Future*.

as the stipulation concerning news and opinion.[258] However, they were mainly determined by objective criteria elsewhere in Europe and could have been exclusively (see the appendix to this chapter).

Use of government advertising

The third suggestion canvassed to advance diversity was to spread government advertising more widely, as has been the case in Norway (see the appendix to this chapter). Press qualifying for a newsprint subsidy could automatically also have advertising placed with it from government, nationalised industry and local government. All organisations and businesses benefiting from government subsidies could also face this stipulation to diversify advertising.[259] But such a scheme would require, at the least, to be kept at arms length from the state. Otherwise, it had the potential to increase political patronage.[260] It was open to manipulation to increase Labour movement representation.

The Advertising Revenue Board and Curran's Solution

The disagreement between these different notions came to a head at the fourth meeting of the working party in March 1973, when the debate was between Moonman and Curran.[261] Both saw scope for some 'arms-length' state intervention but dismissed the explicitly statist printing corporation, which did not figure prominently in the discussion. To some extent, the debate concerned tactics, not strategy. Both sides' strategy was to provide a

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[258] Minutes of the Second Home Policy Committee on Communications, 10 January 1973: 3. See also Viner, NUJ Policy: 8-9, Richardson, Proposals: 3.

[259] Richardson viewed that a system of this sort would be simple to administer, as the subsidised press would complain if advertisers flouted the rules. (Richardson, Proposals: 8).

[260] James Curran, 'The Newspaper Press: Salvage or Save?', RD662/March 1973: 24.

[261] Minutes of 4th Home Policy Committee on Communications, March 8 1973:1. A Cambridge-educated academic, Curran stood for the Cambridge parliamentary seat in 1974. Curran went on to become an academic advisor to the Royal Commission on the Press, that shall be discussed in Chapter 3. Since 1989 he has been Professor of Communications at Goldsmith's College, University of London. He is author and editor of numerous books on the press. As a journalist, he was founding editor of *New Socialist* from 1981 to 1984 and was a *Times* columnist from 1982 to 1983. (Griffiths, Dennis. 1992. *The Encyclopedia of the British press, 1422-1992*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.: 180).

more diverse press. The debate was on how much state control was needed to achieve this.

An Advertising Revenue Board or, in Curran's variant, a Media Advertising Corporation, provided an answer to the problem of bifurcation and diversity. This would be more extensively interventionist. MP Hugh Jenkins initially advocated it on the committee and Curran vigorously supported it.[262] Though, again, a policy transfer with Scandinavian inspiration, it was more explicitly state interventionist than the Scandinavian schemes, reflecting what was perceived as the more concentrated nature of the British national press. It can also be argued that it was a product of New Left enthusiasm for greater state involvement, as there would be effective nationalisation of part of the advertising function.[263]

The corporation would collect all revenue for press publications directly from advertisers; charging market rates. It would redistribute this predominantly back to publishers, proportionate to circulation. The revenue would thus be distributed on the basis of the number of readers, not, as with advertisers, on the composition of the readership. There would be an incentive element in this payment to encourage the most effective promotion of advertising space. Such a scheme would reduce the economic distortion of advertising. The advertising value of each consumer would become the same, thus undermining the bias against lower-income readership publications.[264]

In addition, the corporation would keep a proportion of funds to subsidise newsprint costs of newspapers in inverse proportion to their circulation and to provide a launch fund for new publications. The newsprint subsidy would offset the problem that, without it, the scheme could close some of the broadsheet titles. It would also start to cancel out the advantages that accrued due to economies of scale. Although there was much greater

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[262] Hugh Jenkins, 'Communications and Advertising', RD 530/January 1973:1-3, Minutes of the Second Home Policy Committee on Communications, 10 January 1973: 1-3.
[263] For a discussion of this see Curran, Different approaches: 112-3.
[264] James Curran, 'The Newspaper Press: Salvage or Save?', RD662/March 1973: 2, 35-7.

state involvement in this scheme than in those on which it was based, Curran argued that his suggestion had little potential for political manipulation and censorship.[265]

Curran's extensive work heavily influenced the Communications study group. The March 1973 meeting agreed that providing a newsprint subsidy "...was in effect only a safety net...", although we should add that it would have been an important one. The meeting plumped for a Media Advertising Corporation, where redistribution was based on circulation. However, not everything went Curran's way. Benn, from the chair, still called for more discussion on a public service concept of the press, which Curran had explicitly dismissed.[266]

OWNERSHIP AND DEMOCRACY

Discussions regarding the involvement of those in the newspaper industry were part of that ongoing debate in the Labour movement on industrial democracy, mentioned earlier. By the 1970s, other subcommittees, involved in discussing policy for industry as a whole, were developing policy on worker participation.[267] But workers' involvement in newspapers raised particular questions because of the nature of media influence, the hegemonic position of the liberal classical notion of press freedom and the relationship between media workers and wider community involvement. These were some of the areas contested by those on the Communications group – with union representatives, individual journalists and leading MPs viewing the question of democratising ownership differently.

The campaign for worker participation was a concern of some newspaper staff and their union, the National Union of Journalists. By the 1970s, several newspapers had forged agreements with the NUJ, agreeing to increased consultation on policy and staffing matters. One commentator viewed that "...the spread of participatory ideas has involved

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[265] *Ibid.*:3, 35-40, 41.
[266] 'Minutes of the Fourth Home Policy Committee on Communications', March 8 1973: 3.
[267] One example of the consideration of economic democracy by a NEC subcommittee is provided in Capital Sharing Study Group 'Final Draft of Green Paper', RD: 846/July 1973: 49-50.

Fleet Street in an incipient and important crisis of authority".[268] An indication of this was that when a prominent editor wrote a book in 1972 on the national press, he felt the issue merited two chapters.[269]

At the forefront of these demands was the short-lived Free Communications Group (FCG), with its journal *The Open Secret*.[270] Reflecting the New Left interest in industrial democracy, it had worked with NUJ chapels in making demands for increased involvement.

The NUJ participated in helping shape changes made on the *Daily Express* in 1973 – the first time this had happened in Fleet Street.[271] The concept of worker participation had become union policy in 1972.[272] By 1974, the *Times* had a monthly Editorial Consultative Committee. The *Daily Mirror*'s owners had agreed to monthly meetings between the management and the NUJ chapel.[273] We will consider other collective decision-making structures for those working on the title in Chapter 6. The *Guardian* saw a campaign, which was eventually unsuccessful, for democratically elected journalist representation on the Scott trust board, that ran the paper, and a staff veto on senior appointments.[274]

However, the FCG's aims were broader. The first pamphlet in its *In Place of Management* series identified a range of demands to be placed on newspaper firms. These ran from a call for news teams, through consultation and the sharing of editorial and

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[268] Smith, A. 1974. *The British press since the war*. Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield.: 283-4.
[269] Wintour, *Pressures on the press*: Chapters 7 and 8.
[270] Smith, *The British press*: 290, Wintour, *Pressures on the press*: 78.
[271] The union had produced a document on policy within the paper, which the Father of Chapel saw as echoed in changes made to the paper. He considered that it had become more liberal and more open to union views. Nevertheless, he thought it impossible to say what influence the document had on the changes. Yet, he saw the participation as important "...at a time when, on the other side of the Street, Rupert Murdoch is seeking to turn it into a bogey word and denouncing the very idea as little short of red revolution". (Ross, David 'Staff help to shape a paper', *The Journalist*, May 1973).
[272] National Union of Journalists. 1973. *National Union of Journalists Annual Report 1972-3*. London: National Union of Journalists.: 49.
[273] Smith, *The British press*: 302.
[274] Smith, *The British press*: 302-8, quoting Free Communications Group, *The Open Secret*, No. 7, 63-5, Taylor, Geoffrey. 1993. *Changing faces : a history of The Guardian, 1956-88*. London: Fourth Estate.: 303-4.

managerial control to culminate in demands to share ownership with management.[275] Inspiration and policy transfer came from France and *Le Monde*.[276]

The Communications working party had a remit to consider journalists' democratic involvement within the media from the start. A background paper produced for the committee saw the need for this.[277] The paper highlighted alternative forms of media organisation to be considered. For the press, it flagged up the possibility that the study group could consider creating structures for both self-management of new titles and participation in existing ones, as opposed to community participation.[278]

Despite its involvement in practical initiatives, the NUJ leadership wanted only limited journalist participation and a rigid separation between participation and workers' control. This reflected the Labour right's views, and a mixture of some liberal pluralist and European social market ideas. Asked to summarise its position at the start of 1973, the committee was told that the NUJ leadership was wedded to the view that press freedom rested "...upon theoretical individual proprietorship...". Yet, it was possible "...to mitigate its effect...", by separating the owners from editorial policy. The union's research officer George Viner indicated that this was based on a view that: "Newspaper proprietors do not want to be cast in the villainous role of manipulators of public opinion." They could, in fact, play a positive role as a bulwark against external takeovers.[279] Viner accepted that existing TUC proposals for supervisory boards, which included workers and would have veto powers over management, should include the newspaper industry. But he viewed that "...workers' control...could be calamitous in the newspaper industry".[280]

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[275] Free Communications Group, *In Place of Management, No 1 - Free the Press - the Case for Democratic Control*, 6-15, quoted in Smith, *The British press*: 290-4.

[276] As one hostile commentator put it, "...many English journalists have been led astray by their admiration for that distinguished newspaper *Le Monde*". From the 1950s onwards, the staff had controlled part of the stock of *Le Monde*, giving them a veto on major decisions (Wintour, *Pressures on the press*: 88). See appendix to Chapter 2.

[277] Home Policy Committee: Communications, RD324/April 1972: 6.

[278] Home Policy Committee: Communications, RD324/April 1972: 6. For some discussion on industrial democracy in the Labour Party in this period, see Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 68-9.

[279] Viner, NUJ Policy: 1-2.

[280] Anon. 1973. 'Our 'special' role in industrial democracy', *Journalist*, August 1973.

Yet, the union's view was not the only sway on Labour Party thinking on the working group. More influential was the demand by other journalists on the committee for workers' involvement. Geoffrey Goodman called for measures to democratise press ownership.[281] And it was the approach outlined by the journalist Neal Ascherson, from the FCG, which the group explicitly agreed to in March 1973.[282]

While the NUJ leadership had divorced the two questions, Ascherson argued for the same range of demands as the FCG outlined, from participation to sharing control. Control ranged from the right of access to company information, through staff strategic editorial control, where the editor was in charge of tactical decisions, to the launch of press co-operatives.[283]

Reflecting the debates outlined in Chapter 1, while the emphasis was on worker participation, Ascherson was among those on the committee who wanted broader democratic control than just by journalists. This reflected the view of others in the Labour Party and the left of the NUJ, who wanted the involvement of other communication workers.[284] Ascherson saw the need for other workers to be included with journalists as majority owners in staff co-operatives. But he went beyond syndicalist views to support increasing public access and participation. He envisaged that outside interests, not just unions, could have a non-controlling stake in newly-launched co-ops.[285]

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[281] Geoffrey Goodman, 'Quality and Diversity In The Press' RD 651/February 1973: 3.

[282] 'Minutes of the Fourth Home Policy Committee on Communications', March 8 1973: 3, Neal Ascherson, 'Internal Press Freedom: Notes on Democratic Control in the Newspaper Industry, March 1973', Curran interview. The award-winning journalist and author Neal Ascherson started as a reporter and leader writer for the *Manchester Guardian* before working for the *Scotsman* and then moving to the *Observer* in 1960. Among other posts on the title, he was the Eastern European correspondent from 1968 to 1975. He was a columnist and associate editor from 1985 to 1989. In 1990, he became a columnist on the *Independent on Sunday*. From 1998 onwards, he has been an assistant lecturer in the Institute of Archaeology at University College London. (2002. *Who's who 2002 : an annual biographical dictionary*. London: A. & C. Black, 2002.)

[283] Ascherson, Press Freedom.

[284] An indication of the more radical solutions being bandied about at this time came from the Benn confidant Ken Coates writing in *Tribune*. The leading light in the Institute for Workers' Control argued that democratic representative bodies in the press industry would need to include others than just journalists and incorporate all other workers which helped produce newspapers. (Ken Coates, 'Workers' control: democratising newspapers', *Tribune*, December 15 1972), The NUJ left's view was aired in Anon., 'Our 'special' role in industrial democracy' *Journalist*, August 1973.

[285] Ascherson, Press Freedom: 4-5.

Benn, as the working group's chair, was also committed to public participation. Typically entering the lion's den, he made the demand for greater participation to a conference of the Guild of British Newspaper Editors in April 1972. Yet, this was not reported in anything like the same detail as the attack on media power he made in his chairman's address at the end of the 1972 Labour Party conference, which the press strongly condemned.[286] He followed this up with a paper for the Shadow Cabinet paper, that was not submitted, but which envisaged a combination of citizen and worker participation.

However, this was mitigated by his concern for Labour movement representation – to reduce anti-Labour movement bias. So, he wanted to strengthen union power and provide only limited public participation. He visualized the election of newspaper worker committees, which would adjudicate on complaints from the public on examples of bias. Such a body would have no more power than that to make a report. It would not provide the right of reply that we shall consider in later chapters. Yet, Benn envisaged that the report would build up a policy that would influence future news production.[287]

The study group did not consider Benn's scheme. Instead, although the Newspaper Proprietors' Association was "...fanatically hostile..." to broadening involvement in newspapers as a threat to 'press freedom', as Ascherson, put it, the committee supported his approach.[288]

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[286] 'The Ethics of Circumstance' *Tribune* October 1 1972, Labour Party, Conference. 1972. *Report of the seventyfirst Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Blackpool, 1972, October 2-6.* London: Labour Party.: 348-9, Linton, Policies: 1.
[287] Benn, Tony. 1974. *Speeches by Tony Benn.*: 173-5, Panitch and Leys: 59-60.
[288] 'Minutes of the Fourth Home Policy Committee on Communications', March 8 1973: 3, Ascherson, Press Freedom, Curran interview.

THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE WORKING PARTY: DELAYS, DIVISIONS AND DECISIONS

It had been originally aimed that the report of the committee would be published as an opposition Green Paper by the end of 1972. However, this underestimated the discussion's contentious nature and the scale of the task involved. Even at the first meeting of the committee, the minutes record "...a measure of scepticism as to whether it would ever succeed in agreeing [a policy]".[289] After the 1972 deadline passed without agreement, another date was set to settle on recommendations for *Labour's Programme for Britain 1973*, to be completed by April of that year.[290] As it was, the party policy document – agreed after meetings of the NEC and a joint meeting with the Shadow Cabinet – baldly stated that "...more work would be necessary..." on the committee before any decisions could be made.[291] The study group delayed deciding on policy repeatedly and divisions emerged between the right and left as to what strategy to adopt. This question of delays was to dog Labour media policymakers in the future, as we shall see.

Nevertheless, *Labour's Programme* gave important pointers as to the party's position on the press. It explicitly took a New Left position. It supported diversity and regarded press and media internal industrial democracy as "...essential...". It was both a guarantor of independence and a goal in its own right; allowing "...greater freedom for those working within the media both to express their views and to share in the decision-making process".[292]

Yet, the working group could not agree on either industrial democracy or diversity. On the former, although Ascherson's position had been agreed, sceptical voices had been raised during the discussion. MP Christopher Mayhew made a last ditch attempt to stop

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[289] 'Home Policy Committee Note on Communications Meeting', RD370/June 1972: 1.
[290] 'Minutes of the Second Home Policy Committee on Communications', 10 January 1973: 1-2, See also 'Home Policy Committee on Communications Final Report Background Note', RES 59: 1.
[291] Benn, *Against the tide*: 35-43.
[292] The document also expressed concerns about concentration and cross-ownership. This was seen to lead to possible conflicts of interests between different parts of media businesses. (Labour Party, Conference. 1973. *Labour's programme for Britain : annual conference 1973*. London: Labour Party.: 87-8).

the policy.[293] He supported some workers' participation but was against journalist, union or staff dominance. He believed that media worker control could be a recipe for a "...left-wing takeover".[294] However, Benn recalls that Mayhew was in a minority at the meeting that discussed the draft in January 1974.[295]

The other division was on whether to adopt a public service or strongly interventionist social market model to bring diversity. Pressures for Labour representation were entwined with a public service model, as was mentioned earlier. The chair Benn summarised the objectives of the working group thus far, in May 1973, as supporting a "...public service framework of supervision...", which would include public ownership of printing facilities. His diaries recall that this position was broadly accepted on the committee.[296] However, the minutes indicate that this was not the case. There was a division. Benn advocated that the Labour Party set up a commission to govern the media, promoting a public service model. Supporters saw it as the most effective way to implement the committee's agreed objectives. However, despite Benn's assurances that such a commission would have no control over content, those against setting up a politically-appointed body to regulate the media thought it would be open to political and state influence.[297] As it was, the committee eventually placed its emphasis on a social market model.

As has already been indicated, the plan was for the committee's draft to be written into a report, which would be published to provide for further discussion. Yet, crucially, despite what had been written in *Labour's Programme for Britain 1973*, the February 1974

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[293] Mayhew was a former junior defence minister and MP for South Norfolk and Woolwich East. He resigned from the Labour Party in 1974 to join the Liberal Party (Benn, Tony, and Ruth Winstone. 1995. *The Benn diaries*. London: Hutchinson.: 653, Curran interview).
[294] Christopher Mayhew 'Note on Draft Report', RD 961/December 1973: 1.
[295] Benn, *Against the tide*: 98.
[296] Minutes of the Second Home Policy Committee on Communications, 10 May 1973: 1-2, Benn, *Against the tide*: 31.
[297] *Ibid.*

election manifesto included no input from the working party and provided no press or media policy.[298]

THE FINAL REPORT: *THE PEOPLE AND THE MEDIA*

The eventual production in 1974 of the study group's report, *The people and the media*, was Labour's first-ever public document dealing with the mass media.[299] It is important to again remember that it represented the position of the committee, not Labour Party policy.[300] An indication of this was that it was presented as a discussion paper aimed at promoting further debate.[301]

Reflecting the study group's New Left emphasis, the report made a powerful case for intervening to extend ownership plurality and was less concerned with explicitly promoting a Labour movement press. As Tom O'Malley perceptively indicates, it focused less on the relationship between government and the press and more on the responsibilities of the press to the public.[302] This was indicated in the title of the report. It also called for increased democratisation in the press, although was less specific on policies to achieve this than Ascherson had been, for instance.

However, the relationship with Labour representation was evident. So, *The people and the media* argued that the tendency to concentration was intertwined with bias, particularly pronounced against the unions.[303] The "...basic conservatism of the Press..." was "...also reflected in the tight pattern of ownership in the press industry".[304] Nevertheless, it was the latter that was emphasised. Political democracy required a press

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[298] Labour, Party. 1974b. *Let us work together - labour's way out of the crisis : the Labour Party manifesto, 1974*. London: Labour Party., Harrison, Stanley. 1974. *Poor men's guardians : a record of the struggles for a democratic newspaper press, 1763-1973*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.:242-3.
[299] Curran, Different approaches: 129.
[300] Labour Party, *The people and the media*: 3.
[301] Freedman, 2000: 135, Freedman, 2003: 90.
[302] O'Malley: 89-90.
[303] Labour Party, *The people and the media*: 20-2, Sixth Meeting on Communications, 'Communications: Draft Report': 20-1.
[304] Labour Party, *The people and the media*: 5,6, Sixth Meeting on Communications: 2-3.

as a guarantor of free expression, not just to inform, but also "...to express the views and interests of different sections of the community".[305]

The method to achieve this again highlighted the tension between a public service model and a social market one. Despite the objections of Curran and others, the first principle the report stated was to entrench the media within the public service model and public funding framework.[306] It supported the setting up of a state-funded Communications Council, which would oversee "...the operation, development and interrelation..." of the media, including the press. However, its role did not appear so all-embracing as the body Benn envisaged. Its main task would be to oversee a right of reply, which we will discuss in later chapters. It would also review and publicise the press's operation.[307] In addition, although the final report draft had rejected calls for a National Printing Corporation, the final report left this possibility open.[308] But, as Frank Allaun suggests, this proposition was given less prominence.[309]

Instead, the overall emphasis was towards the social market model. The report identified advertising and bifurcation as a key threat to diversity. Following the insistence of some, most notably Curran, the group agreed on an Advertising Revenue Board to deal with these problems.[310] The board would administer advertising revenue. How this would be achieved was more clearly outlined in draft proposals than in this final report, but followed a similar pattern.[311] The advertiser would still be free to choose what media to advertise in and the newspaper to take as much of whatever advertising it wanted.[312] Some surplus revenue would be withheld to set up a fund to launch new titles.[313] This

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[305] Labour Party, *The people and the media*: 16, 17, Sixth Meeting on Communications: 15, 16.
[306] Labour Party, *The people and the media*: 8.
[307] *Ibid.*: 12-3.
[308] *Ibid.*: 30.
[309] Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 86. Frank Allaun was the industrial correspondent for the Daily Herald, before becoming the MP for Salford East. He was elected to the National Executive in 1967 and was chair of the party in 1978-9. (1983. *Dod's parliamentary companion.*: 342) He was a member of the media study group in the period from 1972 to 1974 and chaired the group between 1979 and 1983.
[310] Labour Party, *The people and the media*: 26-7, Sixth Meeting on Communications: 28-9.
[311] Labour Party, *The people and the media*: 27-8, Sixth Meeting on Communications: 29.
[312] Labour Party, *The people and the media*: 27.
[313] Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 85-6, Labour Party, *The people and the media*: 26-9, 31-2. See also O'Malley: 89-90, 94, Curran, Different approaches: 112-3.

launch fund would require those newspapers involved reaching a certain circulation before all funds were made available. On top of this, as with Curran's proposals, the report also called for newsprint subsidies to provide further economic support for publications. Yet, in addition, *The people and the media* advocated diversifying the advertising of all "...government and semi-government bodies..." to include all smaller publications, despite Curran's fears.[314]

The report saw that the radical restructuring of the press would also entail extending industrial democracy, although it was less explicit than Ascherson had been on this. As for democratic input from both workers and from the community as a whole, it made a general statement of intent, but did not provide a clear policy as to which group was to have the greater influence. Media workers would have a chance to participate in decisions at all levels and influence the general emphasis of the product with which they were involved.[315] Any publication that received public financing would need to operate some form of industrial democracy. However, the report did not specify the mechanics of this.[316]

Later critics have pointed to the prediction in *The people and the media* that there would only be two or three newspapers by the 1980s. Researchers who influenced early New Labour thinking used this to damn what they see as all 'Old Labour' work on the press and media.[317] While such over-apocalyptic crystal ball gazing was flawed, the vision of newspaper concentration has some validity. While there are not three newspapers, three firms dominate. The claim is certainly more well-founded than the widely-held later predictions that introducing new technology and curbing union influence would see new entrants provide a diverse press.

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[314] Labour Party, *The people and the media*: 29-32.
[315] *Ibid.*: 6, Sixth Meeting on Communications, 'Communications: Draft Report': 2-3.
[316] Labour Party, *The people and the media*: 26-9, 31-2. See also Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 85-6, O'Malley: 89-90, 94, Curran, Different approaches: 112-3.
[317] Richard Collins and Cristina Murroni are so emphatic about this 'flawed prediction' that they mention it twice. (Collins and Murroni: 4, 11).

At the time, *The people and the media* faced major opposition from the newspaper industry and the Labour leadership was distanced from the proposals.

Firstly, newspaper industry anger centred on plans for an Advertising Revenue Board. We will consider this further in Chapter 4. Charles Hamilton, former chair of Times Newspapers, saw that it gave the state the role as creator and prop of the press. This compromised the newspapers' watchdog role.[318] However, as we saw, though more statist than analogous schemes abroad, the revenue board's funding criteria was politically neutral. The liberal pluralist fears Hamilton harboured were also levelled against the analogous Scandinavian schemes and have been shown to be unfounded in practice. (See this chapter's appendix). Also, as was argued in the Chapter 1, his claim that the market could operate as an effective watchdog was flawed.

Where Hamilton's critique was potentially more powerful was regarding the launch fund. The report stated that this could be rationed on the basis that it was proved that such publications met a 'community need'.[319] The basis for this would have to have been carefully crafted to avoid political manipulation. However, again, as the operation of similar systems in other parts of Europe showed, this could have been possible. (Again see this chapter's appendix). A more telling criticism of the board scheme was that it was complicated and lacked sufficient political support across the Labour Party. It would have been the case, as Curran has more recently considered, that an advertising levy would have garnered more support.[320]

Nevertheless, it appears likely that any form of state intervention would have incurred the wrath of the newspaper businesses. It would have had to challenge the historically prevalent liberal pluralist notion in Britain that freedom of the press means ownership freedom from any government control. Frederick von Hayek had provided a classic critique of extensive market intervention earlier in the 20th century, echoes of which were heard in these criticisms of the revenue board scheme. Such an analysis would later

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[318] Hamilton, Charles Denis, and Birkbeck College. 1976. *Who is to own the British press?* London.: 15-6.
[319] Labour Party, *The people and the media*: 29-30.
[320] Curran, *Bending*: 113, Curran interview.

become fashionable with the arrival of Thatcherism, influenced heavily by Hayek's work. Hayek rejected claims that individuals could have a complete knowledge of the world.[321] No central collective authority could centralise individuals' knowledge and be aware of all the factors involved in a decision, such as those required for Labour's plans.[322]

Instead, it was with the operation of the market that the major section of knowledge was developed – the fleeting 'knowledge of time and circumstance', developed through entrepreneurial competition.[323] This knowledge was decentralised and dispersed and the market co-ordinated it. From this concept of social epistemology, Hayek suggested that the market, as the unforeseen outcome of experiment, might not provide the optimum result. But it was less imperfect than any attempt to centralise knowledge.[324] State intervention, such as that envisaged by those in the Labour Party would be detrimental.

However, this critique of interventionism can be challenged. Commentators have indicated that the assumption behind Hayek's theory was that the market operated on the basis of a series of independent, self-employed producers who owned their means of production and exchanged their products freely.[325] This "...veneration of the figure of the entrepreneur..." led Hayek to see monopolies as a threat to this spontaneous order.[326] However, as we have seen with the press industry, oligopolies have developed out of this spontaneous system. In this sense, the system "...carries the seeds of its own destruction".[327]

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[321] Gamble, Andrew. 1996. *Hayek : the iron cage of liberty*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press in association with Blackwell.: 11-13.

[322] Hayek: 77-8, Wainwright, Hilary. 1994. *Arguments for a new left : answering the free-market right*. Cambridge, Mass., Blackwell, 1994.: Blackwell.: 50. For those wanting to direct the market, for Hayek: "The problem ...[was] precisely how to extend the span of our utilization of resources beyond the control of any one mind...". The idea that all knowledge could be centralised, for state intervention to be effective, was an example of constructivist thinking – "...the main source of intellectual error in the modern world." (Hayek: 88, Gamble: 67-8).

[323] Hayek: 80, Wainwright, *New left*: 50, Lavoie.

[324] Any attempt to interfere with it would derail a natural process and would have negative consequences. The role of the state must be hands-off – to protect this spontaneous order. (Wainwright, *New left*: 50, 53-4, Gamble: 69).

[325] Gamble: 72.

[326] Tomlinson, Jim. 1990. *Hayek and the market*. London, Pluto, 1990: Pluto Press.: 112.

[327] Wainwright, *New left*: 54.

What is the particular relevance of this to Labour's press schemes? The precise problem that Labour's plans wanted to address was that there was a concentration of ownership in few hands. The 'invisible hand' had not produced decentralisation. Therefore, it can be questioned as to how Hayek's decentralised knowledge operates in this situation.[328] The contrary seems to be true in this case – the market has concentrated ideological power, if not knowledge, in very few hands. Hayek does not satisfactorily solve this conundrum. He recognises that monopolisation is a problem.[329] Yet, he argues that large firms will be constrained by competition.[330] However, the comparatively static oligopolised newspaper market challenges this assertion. Thus, this classic defence of the need for an unsullied market is refuted. Instead, what appears to be required, at minimum, is intervention to provide for competition and diversity, as the study group's plans sought to do. We shall return to this point in the next chapter.

Secondly, the distance between the proposals of the group and the position of the leadership was reflected in the fact that it failed to form the basis for the second 1974 election manifesto in October. A joint meeting of the cabinet and the NEC in June 1974 discussed a draft manifesto that had some minimal commitments on the media, calling for them to be "...shielded from political and commercial pressures...". The media were also to be encouraged to become "...more responsive to the needs of the community so that they can play an active part in strengthening our democracy".[331] Yet, the manifesto made no mention of specific press and media policy.[332] Indeed, the party's press and broadcast spokesperson John Grant later distanced the leadership from *The people and the media*. He wrote to the *Times* that it was a discussion document and "...in no sense was it Government policy...".[333]

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[328] Tomlinson poses a similar question. Tomlinson: 146-7.
[329] Wainwright, *New left*: 55.
[330] Gamble: 72-3.
[331] Joint Meeting of the National Executive Committee and Cabinet, 'Revised outline of a manifesto', RES 130: July 1974.: 36. See also Freedman, 2000: 143.
[332] Labour, Party. 1974a. *Labour Party manifesto, October 1974 : Britain will win with Labour*. London: Labour Party.
[333] Grant, John. 1975. 'Letter: Press Freedom', *Times*, April 16, 1975. Also quoted in Freedman, 2000: 152, Freedman, 2003: 100. John Grant was a *Daily Express* journalist before becoming an MP in 1970. He left the Labour Party and joined the SDP before becoming the head of public relations for the controversial

CONCLUSION

So, the development of discussions in the Labour Party's committees showed a marked shift from the views that Harold Wilson outlined at the start of this chapter. Yet, although the discussions in the party had moved on, by the time of the two 1974 elections this was not reflected in leadership statements or party policy.

Nevertheless, a clear outline had emerged, which can be identified in relation to the approaches developed in the Chapter 1. Firstly, with the New Left media activists' primary impetus, parts of the party accepted increased government intervention. Some were prepared to advocate explicitly statist solutions with a National Printing Corporation. This, with its plans to contract out facilities, looked to a social democratic public service model. In addition, the idea of a state printing press accessible to working people also echoed the conceptions of Marxists and Keane. Others identified with clearly interventionist social market solutions – such as the advertising tax and newsprint subsidy solution and the scheme to diversify government advertising.

The combination finally agreed upon was of the social market type. Nevertheless, it was one influenced by New Left notions of increased state involvement. It would include an Advertising Revenue Board, which would also operate a new launch fund. There would be a supporting role for a newsprint subsidy and diversified government advertising, together with the possibility of a National Printing Corporation. The corporation was associated with a public service model and there was an attempt to denote the whole approach as such. But it was not.

The package as a whole did have potential problems. Despite denials at the time, such a combination provided for the *possibility* of political patronage, although the experience of such schemes elsewhere shows that this is not automatically the case.[334] Along with fears regarding government advertising, the study group's report did not identify the basis on

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right-wing union, the EEPTU. (Pearse, Edward. 2000. 'Obituary: John Grant', *The Guardian*, October 4 2000).

[334] Labour Party, *The people and the media*: 29.

which members of an Advertising Revenue Board would be appointed or elected. Yet this board would select which publications would be subsidised by a launch fund.

Secondly, this links with the question of Labour representation in the press. Outside the group – in the party and among the 'Old Left' unions – the question of Labour representation was of more importance. This consideration was involved in the concern for solutions to advertising bifurcation, as well as diversity, per se. There was the potential of a politicisation of the revenue board consciously bringing about increased representation, with the justification of achieving balance. Such a board would have had to have been entirely separate from government patronage, at least. This does not damn intervention to provide for diversity, nevertheless. It is difficult to see how meaningful policies could be formulated to challenge press oligopolisation, and indeed bipolarisation, without significant government intervention. The debate was on what shape this intervention would take.

Thirdly, a number of different positions on democratic ownership were outlined in the course of the debate. The NUJ leadership's position shared elements of the classical liberal pluralist and European social market models, with a whiff of Tom Baistow's position. Ascherson's majority view had echoes of the models of some of the revolutionary Marxists and of Williams. Nevertheless, it was clearly separate from those conceptions, not least because it was not conceived as a revolutionary doctrine. Its demand that there should be wider worker involvement than simply that of journalists in democratic ownership particularly touches on similar themes as those of the Marxist approaches. The emphasis of Ascherson and Benn on there being some popular involvement shared elements of the radical democratic approach and Curran's social market notion. However, it was not as developed. The emphasis was still, overwhelmingly, on substituting workers' control for wider community and interest group involvement. The position finally agreed on by the working party, while less specific, also shared some aspects of all these models.

Fourthly, regarding policy formation, little can be said conclusively at this stage because party policy had little changed. The study group's report provided recommendations rather than policy. Nevertheless, there were indications of a division between the leadership and other party policymaking forums. The provisions of Labour's 1973 programme did not make it into either manifesto.

Also, a preliminary point can be made regarding the 'classic positions' outlined in the Chapter 1. It was not the positions associated with the unions that were most dominant in the study group, if we consider the question of democratic ownership or promoting a Labour movement press. Nor were the positions of the MPs particularly decisive overall. Instead, the two figures who most prominently influenced the study group's direction were an academic and a journalist, James Curran and Neal Ascherson. Their influence indicated the extent of the New Left upsurge on the back of the reinvigorated trade unions.

The people and the media group's proposals formed the basis for the Labour Party submission to the third Royal Commission on the Press, which had been set up by prime minister Wilson soon after Labour returned to office in 1974.[335] The working group had welcomed this commission in its report, but it had been set up independently of the study forum's work. The forum report's first draft confidently predicted that "...it is unlikely that the Commission will reach a conclusion radically different from our own".[336] However, this bold assertion was left out of the group's final proposals. As the next chapter explains, this prediction proved to be more a case of wishful thinking than an effective assessment of the commission's direction or the Labour leadership's view.

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[335] Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 85.
[336] Sixth Meeting on Communications, 'Communications: Draft Report': 25-6.

4. The Party, the Government, the Commission and its Minority: Labour from 1974-1979

INTRODUCTION

In the first stage of the new Labour government, the party and key figures in the administration *appeared* agreed. They publicly shared the view that a problem existed with the newspaper industry. They concurred that there was a powerful pressure towards press concentration that was "...socially undesirable..."; that there was press bias against the left; and that newspapers' fate should not be "...determined by market forces...".[337] Implicit in their assessment was a consideration that the press played an important role in democracy; aiding debate and identifying alternatives for discussion.

However, there was no consensus about how this would be achieved and the motives behind what was being demanded. Those who had pushed for the original proposals in *The people and the media* desired diversity and some measure of access and control over the press. Those who spearheaded Labour's submission to the Royal Commission on the Press wanted this, but their main motivation was to provide for an official Labour movement press. For them, as for the minority of the commission, supported by the party, Labour representation was at the heart of the need for structural change. In addition, the Labour leadership came to have little enthusiasm for intervening in the press market to increase diversity. Although, as we shall consider in later chapters, traditional Labour marketing techniques were out of vogue, Wilson was primarily concerned to gain Labour representation and, this, eventually, precluded structural reform.

By the end of its time in office, the Labour administration had done little to deal with the problems with the British press. It had avoided acting on proposals made to it by the Royal Commission on the Press to tighten up monopoly legislation. And it had refused to

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[337] The quotes are from trade minister Peter Shore, who oversaw the press industry for the Government, during a House of Commons debate on the press. (Great Britain Parliament House of, Commons. *House of Commons Hansard.* Cambridge, England: Chadwyck-Healey.(hereafter HOC) 14 May 1974 Vol. 873, col. 1135-7, 1140-1.

implement proposals for promoting plurality that some members of the commission put forward – despite the fact that the administration's own party regarded these as more limited than the measures the party called for.[338]

This chapter will explore why this happened. It will consider the interventionist reforms – partly modelled on the Scandinavian social market schemes previously discussed – which were adopted by the Labour Party and discussed by the Royal Commission.[339] The last chapter concerned itself with policy creation. This section will also discuss the attempt to have these policies approved by the Labour government. Using original evidence, it will consider the motives behind the Labour administration's dismissal of those proposals. It will outline the huge opposition of the press businesses and editors to the proposals – and the divisions in the trade union movement over them. It will look at the divide on the commission between the majority, which rejected state intervention, and the minority, which agreed with the party that providing plurality required more government direction.

In addition, the chapter will look at how the party's proposals for democratic ownership of the press fared under the Labour government. It will outline how the Labour administration, under pressure from the unions, defied press businesses to enact laws on newspaper closed shops. And it will identify the effect of the newspaper firms' ideological onslaught on the party's union plans.

On coming into office, the Labour government rejected the party programme's general thrust and the manifesto that had been agreed. Benn led attempts to provide the NEB with powers to have a substantial stake in profitable firms. Yet, the Labour leadership confined the body to bailing out failing lame-duck firms and reduced planning agreements to voluntary codes, which private industry could ignore. Thus, the NEB was likely to fail before it started.[340] Eric Shaw has questioned whether the Labour leadership were ever prepared to see their own party's plans come to fruition, facing the backlash of

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[338] Basnett and Goodman.
[339] See the appendix to Chapter 2.
[340] Callaghan, *Retreat*: 46-7, Shaw, Eric. 1996. *The Labour Party since 1945 : old Labour : new Labour.* Oxford: Blackwell.: 122-5.

business. Subsequent evidence suggests that businesses were prepared to rise up to oppose the Labour programme.[341]

Instead, while the left was denounced, the dog days of the Labour government saw the disintegration of revisionism. An IMF loan and the subsequent public spending cuts, together with the reluctant embrace of monetarism, saw Keynesianism off. Various interpretations can be put on this.[342] Whichever is accepted, the case is that the Labour government's determination to tackle inflation led it to turn its back on the party programme and stray from the goals of traditional social democracy.[343] By the time the Labour government considered the proposals from the Royal Commission, the dictats of business and the IMF had led the Labour government to abandon these goals. It was also battling to preserve itself as a minority government. Its attempt to sustain its strategy by means of a social contract with the unions was failing, as members balked at continued pay restraint for seemingly little reward. The Bullock Inquiry proposals on industrial democracy, already watered down from those of the TUC, were further diluted by the

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[341] Shaw, *1945*: 122-5.

[342] It has been questioned as to whether Keynesian demand management was responsible for the economic boom in the first place. (John Callaghan, *Globalisation: The End of Social Democracy?*, Essex Papers, 2002: 14-15). Shaw argues that the ineffectiveness of Keynesianism to deal with recession was exaggerated by those on the political right, aided by capital, for their own ends. (Shaw, *1945*: 127-158). Another assessment is that Keynesian-style techniques to sustain accumulation required the growth of a state that did not directly produce a surplus. Its practice worked to arrest the tendency of profit rates to fall. By 1973-4, this period of accumulation was ending and Keynesianism could not cope with a crisis where inflation and unemployment – stagflation – occurred together. (Coates, D. 1980. *Labour in power? : a study of the Labour Government, 1974-1979*. London: Longman.: 179-86, Pilling, Geoffrey. 1986. *The crisis of Keynesian economics : a Marxist view*. London: Croom Helm.: esp. 186-88).

[343] Traditional social democracy had adopted policy targets from the Keynesian framework. It aimed to provide welfare reform and a redistributive tax policy. (Marcel Liebman, 'Reformism Yesterday and Social Democracy Today', in *Socialist Register*, 1986: 10-11). Another commitment was to full employment. (Radice, Giles, and Lisanne Radice. 1986. *Socialists in the recession : the search for solidarity*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.: 7-27). Those defending the Labour government's record point to welfare gains made, including a significant increase in pensions, and argue that Labour brought down unemployment to the OECD average. (Radice and Radice: 124-5). However, the deflationary government policies the Labour administration pursued in response to the end of the boom and the dictats of the IMF contributed to the creation of unemployment, inequality and the deterioration of welfare state provision. (Callaghan, *Globalisation*: 17-18). The Labour government presided over welfare cuts with social services, benefits and health care hit. (Radice and Radice: 124-5, Coates, *Labour in power?*: 30-50, Clarke, Simon. 1988. *Keynesianism, monetarism and the crisis of the state*. Aldershot, Hants, England ; Brookfield, Vt., USA: E. Elgar : Gower Pub. Co.: 316-8, Lawrence Wilde, Lawrence. 1994. *Modern European socialism*. Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1994.: 24). Resources going to education fell. (Radice and Radice: 124-5, Shaw, *1945*: 158). Impoverishment increased, with more than six million people in households at or below the official poverty line. And unemployment almost tripled from 1974 to 1977, when the figure was 1.6 million, before falling back. (Coates, *Labour in power?*: 83-4, Wilde: 24).

Government's 1978 White Paper. Legislation was delayed until after the next election – an election Labour lost.[344] It had done little to deal with the British press's problems.

PARTY PLANS

Yet, by 1975, the party had shown that it wanted change. That year, the party conference passed a momentous and groundbreaking motion. The proposal so reflected party thinking at the time that even those who opposed parts of it did not do so openly, but merely questioned the thinking behind the segments they found objectionable. The resolution welcomed *The people and the media* document. It directed itself to the Labour government and called for an advertising revenue board, a differential newsprint subsidy, a launch subsidy, a national printing corporation, overseen by a reconstituted and representative Press Council.[345]

Thus, by agreeing to this resolution, the party backed the main demands of the media sub-committee, and, if anything, exceeded them. As before, the Scandinavian social market systems, already being developed, heavily influenced these proposals for diversity. A key consideration, however, was that there were major differences between the problems facing the Scandinavian and the British press. Any subsidy system would need to take this into account (as was indicated in the appendix to Chapter 3).

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[344] Panitch and Leys: 128-130.

[345] The motion called for:

"(a) establishment of an advertising revenue board with powers to set advertising rates in press publications, to collect all advertising revenue, and to redistribute it by setting aside a proportion of total receipts in a special fund;

(b) the fund to be used by the board to provide:

(i) a differential newsprint subsidy to aid small circulation publications in each section of the market, conditional upon agreed forms of worker participation in any assisted publication;

(ii) a launch and establishment subsidy for new publications which are owned by non-profit making trusts managed democratically on a co-operative basis by all those employed on the publication;

(c) establishment of a national printing corporation with powers to bring existing printing plant into public ownership, and to provide printing capacity on lease, especially to new publications; reconstitution of the Press Council as a communications council, with responsibility for all the media, its membership to be genuinely representative of the community at large and of workers at all levels in the industry ...". It also supported a right of reply, the whole issue of which will be dealt with in a later chapter. (Labour Party. Annual, Conference. 1975. *Report of the seventyfourth annual conference of the Labour Party, Blackpool, 1975, September 29-October 3*. London: The Party.: 330).

The motion also entwined both motivations for Labour policy that we discussed. It considered diversity both as an aid to the functioning of political democracy and as way of bolstering Labour representation. By considering expression as a 'democratic right', the conference reflected the concern to provide a press that aided the functioning of different types of democracy, from representative to participative. However, as we shall see, the party did not explicitly consider this later. Discussion developed little along the lines of public sphere notions.[346] Instead, speakers in the conference debate again highlighted what they considered as press bias and emphasised that Labour representation was crucial. It was considered that "...increasing diversity [was]... the key..." to solving this problem of Labour movement hostility.[347]

As well as promoting diversity, the motion also considered what this work considered to be the second problem for political democracy – that of citizen participation, control and ownership of the press. However, again, the position taken concentrated on the press industry's workforce. It made it a stipulation that any newsprint and launch subsidy would be dependent on there being a form of industrial democracy. The motion's proposer saw the notion of worker participation as being key in the launch fund proposal. But he made the same awkward substitution of the press workers for all citizens, which had been made before and would be made again.[348] Nevertheless, the motion went beyond internal industry democracy to consider broader community democratic participation in decision-making when it considered the body overseeing the industry. Yet, little was indicated regarding the institutional framework for bringing this about. It is worth noting that the influence of workers' participation can be indicated by the fact that the representative of the NEC, summing up the debate, echoed such sentiments. The chair

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[346] Habermas, *Transformation.*
[347] Labour Party, *Conference 1975*: 331.
[348] The proposer implied that this, in effect, would substitute itself for a broader representation of the wider society than merely the workers in the industry. He argued that: "...if newspaper workers at all levels had some part in laying down the general tone and editorial line of papers, the Press would be a lot more fairly reflective of our community as a whole than it is at the moment." (Peter Hildrew, Labour Party, *Conference 1975*: 332).

of Labour's Press and Publicity Committee, Lena Jeger, linked calls for press diversity and worker participation with the party's wider industrial democracy policy.[349]

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE PRESS

The motion expressed a pressure to challenge concentration that played on the newly elected Labour government. And, at this stage, the Government provided some indication that it was, at least, reflecting these concerns, if not the solutions. The Government announced it was setting up a Royal Commission on the Press, within months of coming into office after the February election.[350] In a Commons debate in the weeks following the announcement, trade minister Peter Shore, charged with overseeing the newspaper industry, recognised bifurcation and saw the powerful pressure to concentrated ownership.[351] This he considered, "...might be judged correct by purely economic criteria...", but "...would almost certainly be socially undesirable".[352] And the same debate saw the Prime Minster Harold Wilson question the classical liberal conception of press freedom.[353] He argued that journalists operated self-censorship when faced with press business dictat.[354] Nevertheless, generally, Wilson was less clear about a cure for this.[355]

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[349] Lena Jeger, Labour Party, *Conference 1975*: 334-5. Jeger was a former Ministry of Information and Foreign Office civil servant. She was an MP from 1953 to 1959, before becoming a *Guardian* journalist from 1959-64. She was again elected to the House of Commons in 1964 and was an MP until 1979 when she retired and was given a peerage. She was a member of the NEC from 1960-1 and from 1968. (Stenton, Michael, and Stephen Lees. 1981. *Who's who of British members of Parliament : a biographical dictionary of the House of Commons based on annual volumes of 'Dod's parliamentary companion' and other sources*. Brighton: Harvester Press.: 190).

[350] HOC 2 May 1974, Vol. 872, col. 1322.

[351] Peter Shore was a Cambridge-educated political economist and former head of Labour's research department. He was PPS to Prime Minister Harold Wilson before becoming a minister under Wilson. He was made secretary of state for trade in 1974, before becoming an environment minister in 1976. He was a shadow minister until 1984. (2000. *Dod's parliamentary companion.*: 283) His hostility to the EEC became less fashionable in the Labour Party in the 1980s. He was raised to a peerage in 1997. (2000. *Dod's parliamentary companion.*: 283)

[352] HOC 14 May 1974, Vol. 873, col. 1140-1.

[353] He noted that there were "...some who even say..." that the proprietors threatened press freedom." (HOC 14 May 1974, Vol. 873, col. 1232).

[354] If a new position was taken 'on high', "...[w]hat happened was that no one bothered to write an article which was contrary to the newspaper's new line." (HOC 14 May 1974, Vol. 873, col. 1233-4).

[355] It was "...easier to describe it than prescribe for it without getting into deep questions of newspaper economics as well as press freedom." (HOC 14 May 1974, Vol. 873, col. 1234).

Wilson and Labour representation

Harold Wilson was primarily concerned with Labour representation in the press, but he was, at this stage, *at least prepared to consider* acting upon it. There was a tension here with diversity and democracy, but there was also a tension within the interest in representation. How could any structural change be achieved to increase representation without further alienating the existing press against a Labour government? This was Wilson's dilemma.

Wilson had become increasingly hostile to the press. Many commentators saw this as a product of paranoia. Yet, in hindsight we can see he had some justification.[356] Academic and media activist Tom O'Malley dismisses any suggestion that the commission *was* merely set up to deal with Wilson's 'paranoia'.[357] He cites Wilson's biographer Ben Pimlott as seeing the reasons were deeper. Nevertheless, Pimlott's account considers that the commission was a form of 'punishment' for the newspapers, following the eclipse of a long honeymoon period.[358] Wilson wanted to admonish the newspapers after their role in two controversies involving Marcia Williams and Lord Ted Short, the latter later shown to be part of a 'dirty tricks' campaign, which the press recycled.[359]

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[356] Writer Stephen Koss shares the view prevalent among Wilson's contemporary opponents regarding this 'paranoia'. (Koss, Stephen. 1984. *The rise and fall of the political press in Britain.* London: Hamilton.: 666).

[357] O'Malley: 89-90, 94.

[358] Pimlott, Ben. 1993. *Harold Wilson.* London: Harper Collins.: 404, 443-8, 694. See also Greenslade, *Press Gang*: 235. On his deteriorating relationship with the press lobby see Seymour-Ure, Colin. 2003. *Prime ministers and the media.* Oxford: Blackwell: 184-6).

[359] The first saw the press try to implicate the Labour leader in an attempt by his former office manager and brother of his secretary Marcia Williams to profit by selling a slag site as land for an industrial estate. In the latter the media attempted to link the Labour Lord President Ted Short and the notorious T. Dan Smith, associated with corruption in the North East. Proof that money had been deposited in a Swiss Bank account linked with Short was later shown to be a smear, possibly orchestrated by MI5. Other 'dirty tricks' campaigns were being waged on Wilson, some which the newspapers picked up on. Pimlott, therefore, suggests that any 'paranoia' was on behalf of the media who were prepared to countenance the conspiracist fantasies. (Pimlott: 625-9, 631-2, Dorril, Stephen, and Robin Ramsay. 1992. *Smear! : Wilson and the secret state.* London: Grafton Books., 'Comment', *Labour Weekly*, April 12 1974).

Commentators and insiders have seen the commission as the product of the strong belief within the Labour Party that the press was biased against it.[360] As we have seen, many in Labour's ranks shared this concern. It was exacerbated by the February 1974 election which saw the bulk of Fleet Street support the Conservatives. Only the *Daily Mirror*, in the words of one Labour member "...reflected the aspirations of the people...".[361] Wilson passionately echoed this theme.[362] He considered that the newspapers only articulated the anti-Labour stance on issues such as EEC withdrawal.[363]

Nevertheless, at least publicly – for it is true that the premier was known for tailoring his words to fit his audience – Wilson also called the inquiry in response to Labour backbench fears over concentration and cross-ownership. However, the inquiry's basis provided little echo of the policies contained in *The people and the media*. Anxieties expressed by Labour MPs and the trade unions about concentration had been heightened by the closure of the Scottish *Express* newspapers, with the loss of nearly 2,000 jobs. The ending of the Beaverbrook operation in Scotland provided a backdrop to the inquiry, which the Labour leader referred to more than once.[364] The Prime Minister also indicated his unease that the readers' choice of newspapers had narrowed.[365]

Nonetheless, Wilson's cross-ownership concern centred on Labour representation. He suggested that without 'outside interests' it would be much more difficult for a paper to financially survive. However, the problem with these interests was that they could possibly bias newspaper coverage. His concern was that it would prejudice the attitude of

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[360] Robertson G., 'Law for the press' in Curran, *The British Press*: 223, Seaton, J., 'Government policy and the mass media', in Curran, *The British press*: 304, Baistow, *Fourth-rate estate*: 60, Snoddy, *The good, the bad and the unacceptable*: 88-91, Hayward: 1, Greenslade, *Press Gang*: 281.

[361] The member was Ioan Evans, HOC 21 March 1974, Vol 870, col. 1320-1321. A similar point was made by him to the House in April. (HOC April 11, Vol 831, col. 632-3.)

[362] See Baistow, *Fourth-rate estate*: 60. It was consistently held. Wilson told the Royal commission that: "In its editorial opinions, and, often, by its treatment and presentation of the news, the Press in Britain is, largely, hostile to the Labour Party." He indicated that most Labour supporters would agree with that assessment. (Wilson, Harold. 1977. *Evidence submitted by the Rt. Hon. Harold Wilson to the Royal Commission on the Press*. London.: 2-3).

[363] HOC 14 May 1974 Vol 873, col. 1234.

[364] See HOC 21 March 1974 Vol 870, col. 1321, HOC 2 May 1974, Vol. 872, col. 1323 and HOC 14 May 1974 Vol 873, col. 1133-4.

[365] HOC 2 May 1974, Vol. 872, col. 1329.

a newspaper firm against the Labour Party if Government nationalisation threatened the company's wider interests.[366]

Wilson's ambiguity towards the Royal commission reflected this tension between the concern for structural change to answer this problem and his anxiety not to alienate the press businesses. So, on the one hand, the intellectual driving force behind Labour's communications committee, Curran, advised Wilson. He revealed to the author that he redrafted the initial inquiry terms and that Downing Street appointed the original chair, the left lawyer Mr Justice Finer, following his advice. (However, Finer died within months of being appointed and his succeeding deputy, Oliver McGregor was more conservative in outlook).[367] Going along with this assessment, former editor and media campaigner Tom Baistow indicates that Wilson had expressed some interest in "...economic intervention that would encourage the founding of new papers".[368]

In the end, however, Wilson justified his critics' fears that he saw the commission as a way of diffusing concerns.[369] The Prime Minister had already indicated that he shared Conservative concerns about subsidies.[370] As the then *Labour Weekly* journalist and now Labour MP and leadership supporter Martin Linton put it: "Wilson...could see that if anything he threatened to do to the press...would immediately provoke hostility, he would reckon it wasn't worth doing. It would be simply like pulling the tiger's tail."[371]

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[366] HOC 14 May 1974 Vol 873, col. 1234

[367] Curran's indication had been to get Finer, as a top left lawyer, as with such a chair "...it may be that something will come out of this commission". Curran says the experience of the 1962 Royal Commission, where a seasoned conservative lawyer as chair had diffused the left, had convinced him that a radical lawyer such as Finer could have the opposite effect. (Curran interview, Linton interview).

[368] See Baistow, *Fourth-rate estate*: 60.

[369] It was in the 'classical tradition' described by one commentator, as "...an Establishment device designed not so much to provide radical critiques as to diffuse controversial situations by long-drawn-out deliberations that come to anodyne conclusions after the problem has subsided." (Baistow, *Fourth-rate estate*: 60, Curran interview, Linton interview). Tom Baistow was a journalist who worked for five national newspapers. He was the foreign editor and special writer on the *News Chronicle*. He was deputy editor of New Statesman for 12 years. He was a long-time commentator on the press. (Baistow, *Fourth-rate estate*).

[370] HOC 2 May 1974, Vol. 872, col. 1330-1.

[371] Linton interview. The tension among Labour leaders is described by Curran thus: "So one part wanted to kick the press issue into touch and the Royal Commission was a nice way of doing that. But another part of them felt that something should be done and if there was a commission, this could build up a consensus for some kind of reform. And this would enable them to act without completely souring their relationship with the press." (Curran interview).

Wilson's own evidence to the commission combined this reluctance to challenge the press with his concerns to improve Labour representation. His "remarkable document" detailed the newspaper smears.[372] But what is significant is that, instead of wanting to tackle the question of press ownership head-on, Wilson identified the problem more narrowly as one of newspaper tactics. His solution was to tighten the laws on privacy, contempt and defamation. He saw that the national press companies should put 'their own house in order'.[373]

THE LABOUR PARTY SUBMISSION TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION

The party's submission to the commission also reflected this insistence on Labour movement representation. However, its suggestions on how to achieve this were different. Those selected from the NEC to represent it were likely to be concerned about representation. The five representatives included Jeger, who headed the party's Press and Publicity Committee, which oversaw Labour campaigning and thus the party's representation in the media. Another was Donald Ross, who edited *Labour Weekly*, a relatively limited circulation paper which represented the party and which had concentrated its coverage on press ownership in calling for a Labour press. The others were two research department officials and Eric Moonman. Thus, only one from the study group, and none of the majority that looked to the New Left proposals, was involved in this key delegation.

The party representatives made central the demand for a newspaper doing for the Labour movement "...what the *Times* does for the establishment". They linked this with bifurcation. They assumed that such a paper would have a high proportion of lower-income readers than the existing broadsheets. They argued that it would be financially impossible to produce a daily Labour movement newspaper with a million readers like

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[372] Wilson, Dorril and Ramsay: esp. 315-6.
[373] Wilson: 10.

the *Daily Telegraph*.[374] It was partly based on this concern that they wanted the advertising market transformed.

Nevertheless, this concern was intertwined with creating a press that aided political democracy – so that "...every section of the community has an equal opportunity to express its views and interests". In order to challenge this, the NEC representatives saw the need to go beyond free-market solutions towards the "...radical redistribution of advertising revenue...".[375] They provided similar solutions to those the party would follow. There would be an Advertising Revenue Board, financing new launches and a differential newsprint subsidy, and the universalising of government advertising.[376] A National Printing Corporation was also mooted. But this was not required to directly reduce the high entry costs.[377] Instead, the representatives saw it as a way of providing for the expected shortfall in printing capacity, which would come with the establishment of the new newspapers envisaged.[378]

These proposals showed a clear separation between the party and the Labour government in their approaches. It was true that the NEC's proposals were not party policy when they were put forward; because they were submitted ahead of the party's conference in 1975. This ambiguity was reflected in the fact that the NEC document was not entirely committed to one approach for achieving diversity. The NEC put forward its proposal for an advertising revenue board *for consideration.* Instead, the submission was based on *some* of the ideas contained in the study group document *The people and the media.* However, it was not directly based on that document. The NEC, instead, submitted this

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[374] Labour Party, *Oral Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 11 March 1976: 7-10.
[375] Labour Party, *Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 83 E1, April 1975 : 1, 4, 10.
[376] The Advertising Revenue Board would also finance new launches and a differential newsprint subsidy. The launch fund would be subject to controls, which guaranteed that the less successful publications would be forced to close. The newsprint subsidy would encourage minority publications. The NEC also proposed to the commission universalising government advertising "...regardless of editorial content". (*Ibid.*: 6-7, 8-9, Labour Party, *Oral Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 11 March 1976: 14-16).
[377] Martin Linton was one advocate of a printing corporation on the basis that it would reduced the high start-up costs, as one way of changing "...the rules of the game." (Linton interview).
[378] Labour Party, *Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 83 E1, April 1975 : 7.

separately "without commitment".[379] Nevertheless, by the time the party's representatives spoke to the commission, the 1975 conference policy had been passed.[380] Thus, by then, party and Government policy were at odds.

Not surprisingly, this seeming ambiguity was a source of some confusion to the Royal Commission. The commission concluded from the NEC's evidence that it was not firmly committed to the revenue board proposals and wished the commission would consider other alternatives. This blunted the impact of Labour's demands.

However, this was not the only barrier facing the party's plans. Instead, the main opposition to the proposals came from the press businesses and editors in evidence to the commission, where the plans were given a rough ride. In addition, though, the unions were divided on the proposals. Some gave the ideas on offer a cold reception.[381] Even the TUC did not wholeheartedly support all the proposals. Let's look at these aspects in turn.

The Advertising Revenue Board

The advertising revenue board proposal attracted a particularly hostile reaction from a range of right-wing interests. The businesses, in the guise of the Newspaper Publishers Association (NPA),[382] the Guild of British Newspaper Editors and the Conservative leadership all questioned whether the proposals might act as a disincentive. It would deter some publications from raising circulation or the number of pages they produced.[383] The publishers argued that the role of a board in fixing advertising rates would be a 'considerable intrusion' into the newspapers' overall operation. This, the press firms

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[379] *Ibid.*: 11, Labour Party Home Policy Committee, *Royal Commission on the Press*, RE: 55/ February 1975:1.

[380] Also, internal documents advising the party's NEC on giving evidence treated *The people and the media* document as if it were party policy. (Labour Party Publicity Committee, *Notes for those giving oral evidence*, RE: 472/February 1976: 3, 10, 11, 14, 16).

[381] A number of unions we will mention cold-shouldered the proposals. The printers union SOGAT supported *considering* the advertising revenue board, but favoured an advertising levy and subsidies.

[382] This represented all the national press owners, with the exception, at the time, of the Mirror Group and the *Morning Star*. (Newspaper Publishers' Association, *Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, July 1975: 51).

[383] *Ibid.*, The Guild of British Newspaper Editors, *Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 7 February 1975: 17, Speech by Edward Heath, HOC 14 May 1974, Vol. 873, col. 1129.

implied, would hinder competition.[384] In the words of the editors' association, the board would "...subsidise inefficiency...".[385] A key Labour activist has subsequently argued that Labour's plans were open to this criticism.[386]

The publishers and the Conservative leadership argued that advertising redistribution would not help economic viability, because 'overmanning' was one of the major economic problems. The Guild of British Newspaper Editors saw new technology as the solution. The printers' union, the National Graphical Association (NGA), also shared the NPA's concern that advertising revenue would not be large enough to finance such ambitious plans.[387] The NPA rejected a key assumption of bifurcation behind both the advertising revenue and any levy proposal, in addition. It argued that a disproportionate amount of advertising was *not* spent on attracting those with high income. It noted, for instance, that many 'quality' newspapers had lower social class readers.[388]

Finally, the publishers and the advertising industry saw that the board would imperil editorial independence. The publishers questioned both the ability of the board and the criteria by which it would subsidise some publications. It would have "...the power to bring about the closure of publications...".[389] The Advertising Association, in its evidence to the commission, feared that editors would sway their views towards those of the board in order to stay in business.[390]

Were these criticisms of the advertising board justified? Firstly, there was the question of inefficiency. A point to make about this is that it took a narrowly market-driven view of

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[384] Newspaper Publishers' Association: 46.
[385] The Guild of British Newspaper Editors, *Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 7 February 1975: 17
[386] "I could certainly foresee most political difficulties there because essentially you're taxing successful newspapers to redistribute the money to less successful ones. And you can just imagine the Tory line of attack that could produce; that you were taxing success or that you were subsidising uneconomic newspapers. (Linton interview).
[387] Newspaper Publishers' Association: 6, 44, National Graphical Association, *Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 24 March 1976, The Guild of British Newspaper Editors, *Oral Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 7 February 1975: 17.
[388] Newspaper Publishers' Association: 42-44.
[389] *Ibid.*: 48-9.
[390] Advertising Association, *Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, October 27 1975

the provision of publications. It ignored the arguments justifying diversity on the basis that it had been needed for information and to facilitate debate, required in different democratic systems. Thus, it can be argued that the cost to the community of the externalities that have come with market provision – the lack of press choice – is a larger expense than that of some marginal increase in inefficiency. Importantly, the charge of inefficiency is a similar one to that which had been levelled against the Scandinavian subsidy systems and have been found to be largely unproven (see the appendix to Chapter 3). If such an argument had been made about market-led provision of the arts in Britain, then the Arts Council would have been disbanded.

As for the charge that the revenue board did not address the real problem of 'overmanning' to be solved by new technology, this was to miss the point. The board proposals aimed to redress inequality in the industry. They neither helped nor hindered dealing with 'overmanning' and did not automatically preclude the introduction of new technology within the press. The most that could be said was that it made some publications more viable at the expense of others. It was, at best, unconvincing that 'overmanning' provided the primary obstacle in the way of diversity. The subsequent failure of the introduction of new technology to greatly broaden the range of titles did not bear out these claims.

Further, it cannot be disputed that bifurcation has been a factor in the British press and that a large proportion of advertising revenue has been targeted at high-income readers, as was indicated in Chapter 1. And regarding the claim that the broadsheets had lower C/D/E social class readers, this, in itself is not surprising. The more important aspect is whether these papers attract a larger percentage of A/B readers, which they do.[391] If it were otherwise, then what would be the attraction to advertisers in paying premium rates to newspapers that had a lower circulation than their tabloid counterparts?[392]

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[391] See Tunstall, *Newspaper power*: 12-4.

[392] In arguing this to the commission, on the key point of what percentage of advertising was spent on the 'quality' press as opposed to the 'populars', the publishers merely indicated that "...a *considerable* amount of advertising money [was]... directed at attracting volume." (Newspaper Publishers' Association: 42-44. My emphasis).

Newsprint subsidy, launch fund and advertising

More significant were the criticisms of the sizeable extent of state intervention involved in the Advertising Revenue Board and of the question of independence. In one dramatic claim, some press firms suggested that they were so hostile to subsidies that they might: "...prefer that their papers should close rather than that they should run the risk of the freedom of those papers being limited...".[393] There was also the consideration of whether the scheme's costs could be sustained by advertising.

Experience from abroad has shown that for tax and levy schemes, the fear of editorial independence being comprised has been dispelled. Also, at least tax and levy schemes have been shown to be completely financially viable. (See the appendix to Chapter 3).

Broader support for the differential subsidies section of the Labour Party proposals existed, *when separated from the revenue board plan.* This prompts the question: was there a stronger argument for the Labour Party to have adopted proposals for a cross-media advertising levy and differential subsidy and launch fund? An advertising tax has had a controversial history in this country, before having been unjustly applied before being abolished in 1853.[394] Yet, the influential proponent of a revenue board, Curran, now admits that an advertising duty scheme would probably have got the support of the right wing of the Labour Party. He has questioned whether it might have been better if the duty scheme had won out in the internal Labour Party discussions. [395] The TUC also supported versions of the tax and levy system.[396]

The press firms also rejected launch funds. They considered that if a group wanted to start a newspaper with a different political stance than those on the newsstands, for instance, the existence of a customer base would be enough to ensure the paper's success.

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[393] *Ibid.*: 29.
[394] See, for instance, Curran and Seaton: Chapters 2 and 3.
[395] Nevertheless, it should be said, he still believes the flexible application of a revenue board scheme would have been more effective in broadening diversity. (Curran interview).
[396] Royal Commission on the Press: 121.

They suggested that: "The national newspapers would in no way resent a newcomer which aimed to give, what it believed to be, a different political emphasis."[397]

Yet, the arguments made against launch funds can also be challenged. Such economic objections ignore democratic grounds for intervention. There is a tendency to oligopoly and high barriers to newspaper market entry. The businesses' claim that a new entrant would not be resented ignores the possibility that this newcomer might well indicate what it believed were the biases and shortcomings of the existing press. This might not be received too well. More importantly, it would be competing for the readers of the existing publications and therefore would be treated as competition for the existing market.

In addition, the press businesses and advertisers opposed universal advertising by the Government, the former calling it a 'dictatorial' and expensive intrusion into the operation of advertising agencies.[398] However, this also took a narrowly economic stance, which neglected other considerations. In addition, it ignored which organisation was the agencies' paymasters in this situation and thus should have had the ultimate power over where advertising was placed. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Labour's plans for universal advertising neatly side-stepped a dilemma. This conundrum was that such plans would potentially mean the state advertising in legally-available far-right publications, that Labour supporters would be likely to deem racist, and perhaps pornographic publications, which would be likely to offend a range of supporters.

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[397] Turner 15.
[398] Newspaper Publishers' Association: 47-8, Advertising Association: 32-3.

DEMOCRATIC CONTROL

As has been argued, another facet of providing a press required for political democracy was to have some form of democratic control over it. In a similar fashion to *The people and the media* proposals, the Labour Party did not heavily emphasise the question of democracy within the press in its proposals to the commission. This reflected the earlier assessments of key activists that they were not achievable in the short-term.[399] It is significant, for instance, that this theme did not feature in the party's oral evidence to the commission.[400] When it was mentioned, it was mainly equated with industrial democracy. This reflected the ideas of those such as the New Leftist and Marxist Raymond Williams and other Marxists. Significantly, there was less emphasis on participation and involvement of citizens as a whole in the existing titles. As with *The people and the media*, the party's proposals were rather ambiguous on how to achieve this democratic control. Press industrial democracy would be advanced by the use of the launch fund. The fund would only be available to publications owned and controlled by profit-making trusts. Apart from this, the party would introduce into the press the industrial democracy proposals that it was seeking to put in place in other sectors.[401]

In calling for industrial democracy, the Labour Party was backed by the TUC, which had produced reports in 1973 and 1974 calling for joint decision-making across industry.[402] The TUC's press proposals also emphasised the involvement of press workers and tended to ignore wider community participation. Its proposals were also hazy and tentative. It envisaged developing a structure of supervisory boards or trusts.[403]

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[399] Curran interview.
[400] Labour Party, *Oral Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 11 March 1976.
[401] Labour Party, *Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, April 1975 : 9. For proposals on industrial democracy in other areas see Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 68-9.
[402] Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 68-9. This reflected the influence of both left social democratic ideas, which were also being developed in parts of Europe - particularly in Sweden and France - and the input of New Left conceptions, promoted by the Institute for Workers' Control. (Callaghan, *Retreat*).
[403] Trades Union Congress, *Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, May 9 1975: 27, 33, ', TUC calls for press reform', *Tribune*, May 30 1975.

As for the media unions, the printers' union NATSOPA also backed the supervisory board proposal involving press workers.[404] The politics of the NUJ had been shifting on this and other issues after 1974.[405] This manifested itself in a more concerted push both at a grassroots level and among certain prominent activists for a measure of workplace democracy.[406] It was also evident in demands for a closed shop, which we will consider later. In submissions to the commissioners, the NUJ emphatically rejected its previous insistence on proprietorial dominance, outlined in the last chapter. But it mainly restricted its calls for journalistic democratic participation to areas such as involvement in selecting editors.[407]

However, the newspaper businesses and editors emphatically rejected even these limited demands. The Guild of British Newspaper Editors viewed that the involvement of journalists in selection of the editor amounted to a popularity poll, not a way to select the best person for the job, which presumably the management was uniquely qualified to assess. It suggested that such an election could become 'political', as if this was not the case when a management decided on editorial appointments. It was said that such elections could only operate if new editors were selected from within the paper's existing staff. This would mean there would not be the injection of new ideas from outside. The editors, it appears, assumed that the journalists, unlike the management, would not be able to assess someone who they did not know intimately. This was despite it being pointed out that they could achieve this through journalist networks.[408]

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[404] National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants, Graphical and Media Personnel, *Oral Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 8 March 1976.

[405] The headline of the June edition of its newspaper, the *Journalist,* which had a left-wing editor, may have been overstating the general picture when it crowed over seeing when describing the recent elections to the union's NEC. Nevertheless, as both those on the right in parliament and those on the left in the union indicated, the NUJ was moving leftwards. (Anon., 'Militants in Power', *Journalist*, June 1974).

[406] See, for example, Anon.,'Chapel seeks say in choice of boss', *Journalist*, June 1974.

[407] National Union of Journalists, *Topics for Consideration: Answers to Questions submitted by the Royal Commission on the Press,* 13 March 1975: 3.

[408] The Guild of British Newspaper Editors, *Oral Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 30 October 1975: 20-4.

In turn, the publishers employed liberal pluralist notions to defend their right to have a privileged role in public debate based on private ownership.[409] The NPA accepted that a newspapers' management controlled many things including editors' budgets, staffing levels, salaries, the number of specialist reporters there could be and the percentage of editorial space. Indeed, the newspaper firms' representatives admitted that: "These inhibitions might be said, of course, to prove the validity of the radical proposition that press freedom is a chimera under a free enterprise system." But they argued that the same was true under a state-run structure, as was the case at the time in Eastern Europe.[410]

But this was not the point. What the Labour Party proposals were attempting to achieve was to successfully ameliorate management domination. Indeed, an argument for industrial democracy was that it went beyond state or market control and answered some of the problems associated with both.

An assumption behind the opposition to Labour's schemes was another liberal pluralist one – that state intervention could not effectively replace the market. The employers and, latterly, the Royal Commission itself shared this argument. It was even echoed by the NUJ representatives, who were concerned at the inability of the state to replicate the unseen hand of the market.[411] We have already considered a response to Hayek's claims on this. However, there is an argument for industrial democracy, which concerns both state involvement and the effectiveness of market domination, and can be applied to the press.

As Hilary Wainwright argues, an important source of knowledge in Hayek's terms is ignored by the operation of the market and top-down state control, such as that in Labour's schemes, if not complemented by industrial democracy. She indicates that in developing his idea of knowledge, which cannot be centralised and was ephemeral,

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[409] As indicated at the start of this work, the NPA's chair Lord Goodman put it thus: "A newspaper is an individual piece of private property which has public responsibilities expressing the views of those people who are running it." Newspaper Publishers' Association, *Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, November 30 1976: 14-5).

[410] Newspaper Publishers' Association, *Evidence November*: 14-5.

[411] National Union of Journalists, *Topics for Consideration: Answers to Questions submitted by the Royal Commission on the Press*, 13 March 1975: 1.

Hayek only concentrated on the knowledge developed by entrepreneurs and commercial agents. He ignored the knowledge developed by waged workers. The implication was that knowledge in Hayek's schema only came in one of two ways. It was either developed through competition and was thus narrowly based. Or Hayek implicitly assumed that entrepreneurs could codify all of the knowledge developed by the workers. This would go against his general view that all knowledge could not be centralised.[412] Tomlinson also questions this individualist notion, arguing that cognition is socially constructed.[413] With this, it can be asserted that, through social cooperation, people can increase the understanding of their actions and can influence society, subject to trial and error.[414]

Wainwright makes the important assertion that a kernel of Hayek's ideas – that not all knowledge can be centralised – is both true and is part of the reason for the popularity of the Austrian's schemes. If this is combined with the assertion that cognition is socially constructed, then a conclusion becomes evident for interventionist schemes, such as Labour's press plans and for the operation of the press market. If Labour's plans did not explicitly involve the workers in the industries, which was being intervened into, including the papers' marketing workforce, they would, at the very least, be ignoring this huge knowledge resource. The application of this knowledge would provide a check and balance on statist solutions.[415] As importantly, an argument for democratic control in private press operations is that, without it, the creative knowledge of all those in the industry is not as effectively utilised and involved as it could be.

Nevertheless, industrial democracy can only be a partial method of securing participative democratic control of the press. One notable democratic theorist has isolated three criteria by which any democratic system can be tested. These are the extent to which: all constituent groups are involved in decision-making; decisions are open to democratic control; and ordinary citizens are involved in administration.[416] The emphasis on

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[412] Wainwright, *New left*: 57-60.
[413] Tomlinson: 111-2.
[414] Wainwright, *New left*: 60, 262-3.
[415] Strengthening democratic participation in the newspapers themselves would provide an effective power base to protect the independence of newspapers from state interference.
[416] Lively, Jack. 1975. *Democracy*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.: 51.

industrial democracy excludes other constituent groups, such as the wider community who consume the press or are affected by it, for instance. These would need to be involved in decision-making. The democratic theorist Norbeto Bobbio notes, in another context, that such an emphasis refuses to accept that there are no problems relating to the citizen that are distinct from those pertaining to a worker.[417]

Discussing the mechanism for extensive community control is outside the scope of this work. Nevertheless, it should be indicated that the operation of democratic control in the press is replete with difficulties. Writers have pointed to problems with participatory democracy in decision-making, which would be applicable to such democratic involvement in newspapers and organisations such as an advertiser revenue board. Not least of these is the size and complexity of society. This means that any simple extrapolation from Athenian democracy to present-day situations would be inappropriate. A key problem is the decisions the workforce representatives and readers would make are complex and not understandable by ordinary citizens. Only experts could make them. Direct democracy is said to be better suited to making either/or decisions than multiple choices. Non-mandated representatives are said to be more capable of handling these.[418] Thus, the level of participation of the citizenry who wished to take an active interest in newspaper control would be limited. However, David Held and Anthony Arblaster indicate that new technology has made a re-examination of different forms of participatory democracy possible. An example of this is, for instance, where citizens decide on proposals made by elected representatives.[419]

As we shall see, the involvement of the Labour government in the issue of the closed shop indirectly highlighted the problems of identifying press democracy with industrial democracy. As important in the evolving history of Labour Party and press democracy was the involvement of the Labour government in another episode in the early years of

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[417] Bobbio identifies this problematic with economistic variants of the Marxist tradition, but it could be equally associated with other economistic trends. (Bobbio: 84).

[418] See, for instance, Bobbio: 71-2, Garnham N., 'The Media and the Public Sphere' in Calhoun Craig, J. 1992. *Habermas and the public sphere*. Cambridge, Mass. ; London: M.I.T. Press.: 366.

[419] Held, David. 1995. *Democracy and the global order : from the modern state to cosmopolitan governance*. Cambridge: Polity Press.: 280-1, Arblaster, Anthony, and University Open. 1987. *Democracy*. Milton Keynes: University of Minnesota Press..

the 1974 administration. Its participation in financing a practical example of industrial democracy in the newspaper industry would not strengthen the case for democratic control and would bolster the Labour leadership rationale in seeking the existing press's support to improve representation.

Scottish Daily News

As has already been indicated, one of the issues that lay behind the setting up of the Royal Commission was the closure of the *Scottish Express* operation, with huge job losses. After it closed, some among Labour ranks called for the Government to support plans for a newspaper to rise from the ashes as a workers' co-operative to aid diversity. A trust board drawn from the workforce would control the title but it would secure some state funding.[420]

While there were divisions within the Labour government's senior ranks from the start, it responded to the request for aid and backed the co-operative *Scottish Daily News* to the tune of £1.75 million – half the estimated launch costs.[421] The Department of Industry and the NEB, presided over by Tony Benn, provided the money.[422] The workers' own redundancy payments, public subscription and the publisher and former MP Robert Maxwell supplied the rest of the cash.[423] For the first two months, the *News* ran on co-operative lines. It was a beacon of light for those who considered that most British newspapers were dominated by autocratic management. But after this short interlude, Maxwell took over as Chief Executive and the experiment effectively died. The paper limped on, but, within months, it had ceased production.[424]

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[420] HOC 24 March 1974 Vol. 871, cols. 393-5, 399-401.
[421] *Labour Weekly*, August 2 1974
[422] Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 137-143.
[423] Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 51, John Hodgman, 'A new paper is born', *Journalist*, April 1975, Kelly, Stephen Kelly, 'Outlook is grim for the 'miracle' paper that Glasgow workers started', *Tribune*, October 17, 1975.
[424] Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 51, Hodgman, Kelly, Outlook.

There were a number of reasons for its failure. Most important for our considerations was that the Labour government was divided on backing the venture.[425] This reflected rightwing ministers' strong opposition to such co-operative initiatives.[426] When a Labour backbencher first made calls for state aid, the Government's initial response was hostile. This was later reflected in the fact that it refused to cover an early financial shortfall, which would have meant financing from Maxwell would not have been needed.[427] The significance of this was that the publisher came to dominate the inexperienced co-operative and after financial difficulties adopted control. He was said to have ignored any works' council decision after this, ending democratic involvement.[428] Under his management, the price of the newspaper was slashed, which merely lost revenue.[429] When problems worsened, despite claiming he would save the title, Maxwell instead offered to buy the building and plant in order to set up his own non-co-operative newspaper.[430]

However, Government reluctance and Maxwell's involvement were not the only reason for the failure. Like many of the NEB's funding recipients, the paper was based on a failed enterprise. The press democracy advocate Ascherson believes that with the original failure, the best journalists had flown to more solvent titles. Those left produced a "miserable" title.[431] According to one employee, it became "...a really cheap, nasty,

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[425] Hodgman.
[426] Wickham-Jones, *Economic*: 143.
[427] Minister Eric Deakins, representing the Government, faced with concerns that the closure would leave a monopoly of evening titles, suggested that: "Some people may ... feel that it is better that there should be one strong newspaper, given editorial freedom, than two ailing local newspapers." The minister for trade believed that a workers' co-operative would be a "...risky undertaking". (HOC 24 March 1974 Vol. 871, cols. 418). This unease in senior Labour government ranks was reflected in the fact that despite Benn's remonstrations, his colleagues refused to finance a shortfall from the amount needed to get the co-operative up and running. Wilson himself cancelled a last-ditch meeting with Benn to discuss the amount, said to be £40,000. (Benn, *Against the tide*: 335, 358, Kelly, Outlook, Personal interview with former *Scottish Daily News* employee and NUJ official, Tim Gopsill, October 1 2002.
[428] Anon., 'Why I quit the SDN', *Journalist*, October 1975.
[429] Kelly, Outlook, Anon., 'Why I quit the SDN', *Journalist*, October 1975.
[430] Gopsill, Tim. 1975. 'SDN sinks', *Journalist*, October 1975.
[431] Though the better printers were still there when the new paper was launched, Ascherson noted that: "...under the strain the journalists did not always ... all live up to the commitment of the manual workers. No amount of money from Mr Benn could make mediocre journalists into good ones." (Neal Ascherson ' Newspapers and Internal Democracy' in Curran, *The British press*: 135-6. See also *Labour Weekly*, August 2 1974.

tabloid rag".[432] This failure also reflected the fact that an independent report commissioned in the wake of the Express titles' closure considered it not feasible to launch a new paper, because its circulation would be too small.[433] There was also a poor take-up of advertising. Yet advertisers later admitted that they were reluctant to advise the *News* on this area, in which management experience was lacking.[434]

Unions, aside from the TGWU, provided limited backing to the venture, despite expectations that they would contribute to the start-up funds. Among the media unions, the NUJ's national executive at first barred its Glasgow branch from investing in the co-operative and even debated whether to carry on paying unemployment benefit to those preparing to be involved in the project. Part of its reluctance to give the paper wholehearted support was the involvement of Maxwell. National print union officials were said to be unconvinced that the paper would be successful.[435]

What the *Daily News* episode indicated was that newspaper co-operatives needed more than just financial support; they required advice and training back-up. Such ventures also needed safeguards. It was an essential prerequisite for there to be a properly-costed scheme, where it was independently assessed whether a market existed for the publication. That assessment also needed to carry sufficient weight with those providing launch funds for such an enterprise. The launch of the co-operative venture also showed that the pressure from the Labour rank and file, the NEC and the unions, meant that there was support for newspaper industrial democracy at the heart of the Labour government, at this early point in the 1974-1979 administration. However, there was also opposition in the Government on this from the start. The refusal to find more money, despite calls from the left of the party for this, also indicated that any support was reluctant, (leaving aside the question of whether such a course of action could be justified, given the problems outlined). As it was, one prominent advocate of newspaper democracy noted that the *Scottish Daily News*' failure "...unquestionably set back the cause of internal democracy,

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[432] Gopsill interview.
[433] *Labour Weekly*, August 2 1974, Gopsill interview.
[434] Advertising Association: 8-10.
[435] Benn, *Against the tide*: 226, *Labour Weekly*, August 2 1974. Kelly, Outlook, Hodgman and 'NEC ban on £200 cheque bounces', *Journalist*, April 1975.

spreading disillusion among both politicians and press workers".[436] It was "...very demoralising".[437]

The Closed Shop

The Labour government also involved itself in the press democracy debate in the saga over its repeal of the ban on closed shops (including those for journalists). The Government was responding to huge union pressure from the movement in repealing the law.[438] Joint opposition to the act brought the two closer. It became part of the social contract.[439]

Yet, the Government faced huge pressure from press businesses and editors "...united in a way ..." not "...seen before...", articulated in hostile press coverage.[440] This was despite Fleet Street containing both closed shops and workplaces where there was 100% union membership, by agreement.[441] Some on the right of the Labour Party also expressed profound misgivings. All opponents were particularly hostile to the NUJ, which changed its position on closed shops more than once in the course of the debate.

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[436] Ascherson, Internal Democracy: 135.
[437] Gopsill interview.
[438] The opposition to the legislation brought in by the previous Conservative administration had been large and represented a considerable radicalisation of the TUC. There was a boycott of the associated National Industrial Relations Court and a campaign to 'Kill the Bill', including a one-day general strike.(Barnes, Denis, Eileen Reid, and Institute Policy Studies. 1982. *Governments and trade unions : the British experience, 1964-79*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.: 140-45, Martin Ross, M. 1980. *TUC: the growth of a pressure group 1868-1976*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.: 305).
[439] Ross, *TUC*: 305. The TUC Labour Party Liaison Committee agreed that repeal of the act was central. (Pelling, Henry. 1976. *A history of British trade unionism*. Harmondsworth ; New York: Penguin Books.: 283). On Labour's return to power, one of its promises to win the support of the TUC was to repeal the closed shop legislation. (Barnes and Reid: 197, 199, Pelling: 285). Repealing the act was seen as a key indicator of the effectiveness of TUC policy. (Ross, *TUC*: 361).
[440] James Prior, HOC 12 February 1975, Vol 886, col. 421. It was estimated by one key opponent of the move that: "...one could form a book of the articles and letters written on the subject." (HOC 12 February 1975, Vol 886, col. 421). Indeed, later, a book on the subject was produced. (Beloff, Nora. 1976. *Freedom under Foot : the battle over the closed shop in British journalism*. London: Temple Smith.) The press businesses backed Conservative amendments. (See, for instance, Brivati, Brian. 1999. *Lord Goodman*. London: Richard Cohen).
[441] HOC 12 February 1975, Vol 886, col. 439-536, Greenslade, *Press Gang*: 284. Although there is a difference between these two sorts of agreement, depending on whether union-membership was demanded pre-entry or post-entry, I shall treat these two sorts of agreements as synonymous.

Objections to the original Trades Union and Labour Relations Bill were manifold, but three stand out. Firstly, the law was accused of strengthening journalists' power to influence newspaper editorial policy. The anxiety was that editors would be forced into the NUJ and would have to abide by the chapel agreements.[442] Opponents saw "...only a short step to election of editors by chapels...".[443] Moonman and some ministers were among those in the Labour Party who were concerned about editorial interference.[444] Yet, the senior minister involved in the legislation slyly questioned this view with typical wit. Former NUJ activist and editor Michael Foot was now Secretary of State for Employment and piloted the law. He suggested that the main threat to editors being sacked or deposed had always come from the newspapers owners who were now concerned over others muscling into their territory. "William Hazlitt said that regicide was quite a respectable affair as long as it was only done by kings and queens but it was when the common people took a hand that a different view was taken of it. The same principle seems to be applicable to the alarm now spread...".[445]

The NUJ, in fact, rescinded its position that editors should be compelled to be part of the closed shop in a right-left tussle and agreed to give assurances that it would not attempt to instruct editors on editorial policy matters.[446] This was despite fears among members of the NUJ executive that this cut across demands for workers' participation, as indeed it did.[447] Under heavy pressure, an opportunity for the union to push for some measure of press industrial democracy was spurned. Instead, the publishers' campaign succeeded in

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[442] NUJ union branches are known as chapels.

[443] The Guild of British Newspaper Editors, *Oral Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 25 March 1976: 13. The Guild of British Newspaper Editors, *Oral Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 7 February 1975: 20-4. See also HOC 12 February 1975, Vol 886, cols. 427-428, 432-433, 439, 493, 504-5.

[444] HOC 12 February 1975, Vol 886, col. 442-3 and 464.

[445] HOC 20 November 1974 Vol 881, col. 1318. On a more internationalist note, Greenslade also cites him as arguing that the appointment of the editors was like tsars' coronation: "...in which the newly appointed autocrat would march in procession preceeded by his father's murderers and followed by his own." (Greenslade, *Press Gang*: 283).

[446] 'Freedom: our hands are clean' and 'Nowhere has the NUJ set out to inhibit editors' freedom', *Journalist*, May 1975, 'Cardiff line rejected in ballot', *Journalist*, November 1975, Royal Commission on the Press: 158.

[447] Knowles, Ron and Roger Protz. 1974. 'NUJ, editors and the closed shop', *Journalist*, July 1974. See also Richard Clements, 'Fleet Street and press freedom', *Tribune*, February 14 1975.

equating journalistic involvement in editorial decision-making with control by the NUJ headquarters.[448]

A second objection, again shared by a number of Labour backbenchers, including Moonman, along with the newspaper firms, editors, Conservatives and Liberals, was that a closed shop could threaten outside contributors from having 'free access' to the press.[449] Nevertheless, double standards were applied on this point. The past president of the Guild of Newspaper Editors' Frank Owens, in a remarkable discussion, told the Royal Commission that everyone should be allowed to have press access.[450] Yet, as one Labour MP pointed out, what was being asserted was not free admission but the right of editors to determine who had access.[451] To that we could add, following Foot, that the newspapers' senior hierarchy had the final say, not least because of their ability to hire and fire editors.[452]

The Labour government's response to all this was to assert that the NUJ leadership did not wish to use closed shops in order to exclude such contributions. Ministers indicated that the requirement that all journalists join the union had operated in much of Fleet Street without such exclusion and, indeed, could not be used in this way.[453] It was indeed true that most of the concerns expressed were groundless – both in what was being demanded at the time and in the way the closed shop was applied after the legislation was

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[448] Ascherson, Internal Democracy: 126-9.

[449] Newspaper Publishers' Association, *Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, July 1975: 24, Guild of British Newspaper Editors, March 25 1976: 2, 16. Indeed, one key Conservative objector, along with a prominent editor, quoted a passage in *People and the Media* on access of the public to the media back at Labour. (HOC 12 February 1975, Vol 886, col. 430-1, Clements). This objection was backed by 60 writers, including socialists, who signed a latter to the *Times Literary Supplement* which expressed the view that a closed shop represented "...one of the most serious threats to liberty of expression that has arisen in this country in modern times." (*Times Literary Supplement*, 25 April 1975, quoted in Royal Commission on the Press: 160).

[450] He viewed that: ""...if a man [sic] has something to write that is worth writing you should not deny the public the right to read it. It is a natural right that the public should be able to hear the opinions of other people." (The Guild of British Newspaper Editors, *Oral Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 7 February 1975: 17).

[451] HOC 12 February 1975, Vol 886, col. 507.

[452] It was also pointed out by the editor of one of the few low-circulation Labour organs *Tribune* that the proprietors had been poor defenders of press freedom, in their eagerness to close down unprofitable newspapers. (Clements).

[453] HOC 12 February 1975, Vol 886, col. 436-448, 522-533.

passed.[454] However, the policy left open the *possibility* that outside contributions *could* be restricted. The difficult area of sports journalist contributors indicated this. Here, indeed, the union did campaign for the restriction of non-union sporting stars' copy.[455]

That journalists arguing for democratic control could deny wider access to outside contributors was a problem for 'workers' control'. It pointed to a real dilemma. Importantly for what is being discussed, it illustrated the potential problems with the lack of clarity in Labour Party thinking. Its proposals on democratic involvement in newspapers were mostly restricted to those involved in the industry. The thinking behind this was ambiguous on the relationship of these plans to broader direct democracy and wider democratic access for all. It can be argued that industrial participation would normally present a step forward for those advocating wider participation. However, it does not guarantee this, as the closed shop episode showed. The legislation had the potential to both advance industrial democracy and, in the course of this, to potentially set back community involvement, because journalists could advocate restricting access to contributors.

There was a third, and less prominent objection, which was significant, nonetheless. As Moonman viewed it, the "...perhaps most important..." concern was that the Labour government was damaging Labour representation by challenging the press. It was argued that putting the newspapers' backs up was self-defeating: "The Labour Party does not

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[454] Claims widely made that the NUJ's more leftwing branches were calling for contributions by non-journalist 'experts' be restricted to two a year were vigorously denied by the left-wingers themselves. Instead, the NUJ's argument was that the closed shop would deter the use of non-union labour employed by proprietors in order to break the union's demands for decent pay and conditions and would be a way of upholding reporting standards. (Ron Knowles and Roger Protz. 1974. 'NUJ, editors and the closed shop', *Journalist*, July 1974, Jeremy Gomm, 'Closed shop freedom', *Journalist*, July 1974, Clements, O'Malley and Soley: 73).

[455] Knowles, Ron and Roger Protz. 1974. 'NUJ, editors and the closed shop', *Journalist*, July 1974. Although this was understandable, by doing so, the union was laying itself open to the charge of being 'anti-democratic'. Two right-wing Labour backbenchers pointed to concerns about the NUJ as a whole in their misgivings. As one, Bryan Magee, put it: "[T]he Press is now drastically contracting.... In these circumstances the NUJ is almost bound by the logic of this situation to use ever tougher...measures to protect the jobs of its members. These are bound to include ... excluding non-union members from writing for newspapers. That is not because it wishes to censor their political views but because it wishes to preserve for its members all the paid employment that there is going." (HOC 12 February 1975, Vol 886, col. 508-511).

benefit from antagonism towards the Press."[456] This was an indication that this was becoming a more powerful consideration, as someone intimately involved with media reform publicly voiced this concern.

Nonetheless, the Government's view of the legislation was that it was neutral. It merely meant there was neither an inducement to provide a closed shop nor a deterrent against such a course, if agreed by both management and unions. It saw that, rather than legislating, both unions and management should be encouraged to produce a binding charter on press freedom, as was being discussed by both sides.[457]

The Charter

Following the passing of the Trades Union and Labour Relations Act, Lord Goodman and the newspaper firms proposed that there should be a legally enforceable charter on the press. This would have subjected the NUJ to "...an exceptional degree of legal restraint..." and was rejected by the Labour government.[458] What followed again indicated to the Labour administration the hostility of the press businesses and editors to any attempt to interfere with their right to control their titles.

As indicated, the Labour government proposed the Trades Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Act. This called for a charter, which would have to be agreed by both sides and would include 'practical guidance' relating to press freedom.[459] Negotiations foundered on the terms of this agreement. The draconian nature of the editors' demands was indicated by an early draft demanding that employers would be able to check the political affiliations of journalists before employing them.[460] Talks broke down when the

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[456] (HOC 12 February 1975, Vol 886, col. 465). This was a view that the insider Curran considers weighed on Labour politicians in their deliberations. (Curran interview).
[457] See, for instance, employment minister Albert Booth, HOC 12 February 1975, Vol 886, col. 437 and Foot, HOC 12 February 1975, Vol 886, col. 533.
[458] Royal Commission on the Press: 158, 159.
[459] *Ibid.*: 161.
[460] 'Hetherington calls for staff politics probe', February 1975

representatives of press firms and editors took the view that such a charter could only be agreed if journalists were barred from the closed shops.[461]

It was after this that the Royal commission stepped into the breach. Its proposals for a charter provided the newspaper firms with a problem. They appeared even-handed and were far from advocating widespread journalistic control. They were meant to preserve editorial autonomy over outside contributions and union involvement. However, the commissioners' first recommendation was that a journalist should be free "...to act, write, and speak in accordance with conscience without being inhibited by the threat of expulsion or other disciplinary action by his union or his employer".[462] In other words, in a policy transfer from other European countries, a journalist would have similar legal rights to those enjoyed in a 'freedom of conscience clause' to write what he or she wanted – not to be dictated to either by the editor or newspaper business. Commissioners also recommended that journalists be involved in the appointment of editors, although they did not indicate how they thought this would be achieved.[463]

This concern for journalist autonomy by the commissioners should not be overstated.[464] Nonetheless, the response of the publishers, in the words of Curran, was to go "...ballistic, because the whole thing had boomeranged. It boomeranged in that very British way when a discussion is taken in a way that hadn't been intended." The press firms were hostile to the charter clause, which implicitly challenged the commissioners' own view that press freedom was to be simply equated with employer control.[465]

However, what is of overall importance is that the Labour government did not accept this charter, under this press business pressure.[466] It is also worth noting that it could not have

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[461] Royal Commission on the Press: 158, Ken Morgan, 'Editors reject charter', *Journalist*, March 1975.
[462] Royal Commission on the Press: 163, 232-3.
[463] *Ibid.*: 156.
[464] The commission's report had also baldly stated that they saw that the proprietors were on the side of upholding press freedom in their dispute with the NUJ. It also had made clear that internal democracy was "... a complex and disputed subject..." on which it was not able to "...express a view..."*Ibid.*: 160, Ascherson, Internal Democracy: 128.
[465] Curran interview.
[466] This was also the case with other legislation the commission called for.

helped advance attempts to wrest press control from newspaper business leaders' hands that the Labour government had dipped its toe in the press democracy waters, by advancing the closed shop legislation, and had witnessed a potential illustration of the Labour Party proposals' weaknesses.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION FINDINGS AND THE MINORITY REPORT

Overall, as it was, the commission sided with the party proposal's critics. Although the majority commissioners accepted the notion that the press was a 'special case', which was needed for the maintenance of democracy, it rejected any extensive intervention into the market.[467] While, as we have suggested, such intervention would have needed to be backed up by safeguards, as Curran indicates, its wholesale rejection prefigured the onset of Thatcherism.[468] The Labour Party chair, as opposed to the parliamentary leadership, on behalf of the party, denounced the report for being "...bland and complacent...".[469]

However, the commission split over its findings. Two commissioners, Geoffrey Goodman and David Basnett, provided a Minority Report – and the Labour Party promoted this.[470] The two wished for more interventionism. They were shocked by what they also saw as the complacent approach of the rest of the body to counteracting concentration and increasing newspapers numbers.[471] Their complaint was that the

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[467] Its emphasis was that the existing number of national newspapers should be maintained. Yet, it shied away from the party proposals, which, whatever their motivation, were aimed at providing diversity. (See, for instance, Royal Commission on the Press: 159-60, also cited in O.R. McGregor, 'Royal Commission on the Press, 1974-7: A Note' in Bulmer, Martin. 1980. *Social research and Royal Commissions*. London ; Boston: G. Allen & Unwin.: 155, Jeremy Tunstall, 'Research for the Royal Commission on the Press, 1974-7', in Bulmer: 126)

[468] Curran interview. It ignored the role of Government intervention in other areas where the market was seen to be deficient in providing goods and services required for enhancing society's well-being, such as the Arts Council's subsidy of culture. The commission also rejected a levy and subsidy system, relying on the rejection of similar proposals by a previous Royal Commission as sufficient justification for this. In addition, the commissioners rejected a scheme for a printing corporation. (Royal Commission on the Press: 120-2).

[469] Hayward: 1.

[470] David Basnett was General Secretary of General Municipal Workers' Union from 1973 and the General, Municipal, Boiler Makers and Allied Trades Union from 1982. He became a member of the TUC General Council from 1966 and was chair from 1977-78. He was a member of numerous committees of enquiry. (1985. *Who's who an annual biographical dictionary*. London: A. & C. Black.: 112)

[471] Basnett and Goodman: 3, Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 72.

majority report was timid and that the analysis it contained pointed to the need for more radical reform to provide plurality and some democratic control. Nevertheless, for the industrial correspondent and Labour government adviser Goodman and the union leader Basnett this was again intertwined with the idea that the press was biased and the answer was to restructure the market so that an official Labour movement press could flourish (a theme that Goodman had already promoted).[472]

However, where the Labour Party and commission dissenters differed was on the solutions needed to bring this about. The minority argued for a commercially-viable National Printing Corporation and a state-financed launch fund to provide assistance to new titles.[473] A similar scheme had been backed by the TUC.[474]

This was a hybrid between a public service model and a social market solution. The use of commercially viable print works was a conscious policy transfer from the Scandinavian countries, which operated this as part of a social market system, as we saw in the appendix to Chapter 3. Yet, the emphasis on a print corporation and the particular way the launch fund was conceived was very much in the public service tradition. Rather than a solution that would restructure the market by directly impacting on advertising, such as that promoted by the Labour Party, the dissenters saw that any financial assistance would be provided by the Government.[475] The two commissioners accepted that bifurcation was a block on diversity.[476] However, they considered that the solution

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[472] Hayward: 1, Curran interview. It is interesting, for instance, that a recent work emphasises the Minority Report's attempt to provide balance in a biased press. (Greenslade, *Press Gang*: 347).

[473] Basnett and Goodman: 11-13, 14-5, Benn, Tony. 1979. *The need for a free press*. Nottingham: Institute for Workers' Control.: 4, Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 72-3, Stuart Holland, 'Countervailing press power' in Curran, *The British Press*: 116, Curran, Different approaches: 117, 133.

[474] The Labour Party only backed the proposal for a national printing corporation as a back-up, if a rush of new entrants led to problems with printing capacity. However, the TUC had backed a similar proposal to that envisaged in the minority report, as had the printing union NATSOPA. (Royal Commission on the Press: 121-2. See also National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants, Graphical and Media Personnel, *Oral Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 8 March 1976: 15-17).

[475] So, for instance, Goodman told the author: "The idea of an independent printing Corporation came from us really from a number of sources. Examples came from particularly Scandinavian countries where printing corporations were run, but on a commercial basis." Yet he also noted that, in the public service tradition: "Our argument, both David Basnett and myself, was that we were using the template of the BBC." (Personal interview with Geoffrey Goodman, August 1 2001). On the latter see Royal Commission on the Press: 10, 11.

[476] Basnett and Goodman: 5.

did not come by altering the advertising market, but by making it possible for newspapers to be printed. A printing corporation was needed, despite spare printing capacity, because existing businesses might not provide this surplus to new entrants.[477] The corporation would be initially state-funded, through the NEB, but would eventually become self-financing.[478]

In addition, in some ways Basnett and Goodman were less vague than the party in their proposals on advancing participative democratic control in the press. They also placed more of an emphasis on community participation rather than just industrial democracy, even if their proposals were less than fully formed. As such, the comment by Hayward that the report did not go as far as the proposals put to the commission by the party is only true to a degree.[479]

The element of participative democratic control involved in the proposals was that the workforce would make up half the board of the corporation, of which many would presumably be printers. The authors were less precise in specifying what form of democratic control would be developed in the press itself. They called for staff press co-operatives, but unlike Labour's proposals, suggested some wider community involvement "...possibly with consumer/reader representation on a board".[480] Thus, the report was prepared to go some distance beyond statist solutions to the problems of the market, towards considering participative democratic control. This is one quarter from which any protection against state abuse would have come.

Press firms and the commission majority opposed the minority proposals because the state would be involved in selecting which papers got launch funding and printing

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[477] Basnett and Goodman: 11. A space needed to be created for a viable lower-circulation newspaper. The two authors quote favourably from the majority report that "...we have no doubt that there is a gap in political terms which could be filled with advantage." (Basnett and Goodman: 5-6).
[478] In addition, the state-funded launch fund would supply limited assistance for publications, which achieved certain readership and advertising levels. There was intended to be a circulation ceiling, at which point subsidy would be cut off. (Basnett and Goodman: 11, 14-5, Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 72-3).
[479] Hayward: 1.
[480] Basnett and Goodman: 17.

facilities access.[481] Indeed, it is not surprising that the newspaper businesses would not welcome those titles' intent on encroaching on their existing market share. Yet, as we saw in the appendix to Chapter 3, targeted subsidies have not led to direct government interference.

The crucial difficulty with the proposals, however, was that the key barrier to increased diversity was not the availability of commercially-priced print facilities. It was the operation of advertising. The Minority Report authors did not address this because they felt advertising business opposition was too powerful.[482] There was already excess capacity in the printing industry. This is what sceptics such as the printers union, the NGA, the editors' representatives and the Advertising Association told the Royal Commission – and the commission agreed.[483] Concern not to antagonise the advertising business meant that the proposals would have only been moderately effective.

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[481] As the propreitors' representatives put it: "Who would qualify? Would bureaucracy consent to print *Socialist Worker* or *Private Eye*?" Evidence of the NPA to the RCP 30.11.76, Great Britain Royal Commission on the, Press. 1977. *Royal Commission on the Press. Final Report. Command 6810 & Cmnd.8810-I.*: 122.

[482] "We thought the strength of the advertising lobby was such that you simply weren't going to get very far with that." (Personal interview with Geoffrey Goodman, August 1 2001).

[483] National Graphical Association, *Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 24 March 1976, Advertising Association: 14-5, The Guild of British Newspaper Editors, *Oral Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press*, 30 October 1975: 5-6. Even enthusiasts in the NUJ saw that it was "...meeting a need which is in some degree already met". (National Union of Journalists, *Topics for Consideration*: *Royal Commission on the Press*: 3).

THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT

The Minority Report was widely supported in the Labour movement.[484] After all, it was very similar to the position advocated by the TUC and the Labour Party was promoting it. But the Labour government did not back it or the recommendations made by its own party.[485]

By 1977, when the Royal Commission reported its findings, James Callaghan had succeeded Wilson. It is now clear that there were secret meetings with members of the cabinet to discuss the Minority Report. Those involved, Roy Hattersley, Peter Shore and Meacher, were prepared to set up a ministerial committee to discuss the minority recommendations. According to Goodman: "There was a real possibility, and I'm not exaggerating ... given the kind of reception that we received." He remembers Meacher and Hattersley to be "...quite strongly sympathetic". However, the politicians were concerned about press company opposition, as was the Labour leader.[486]

Callaghan indicated to the author that he rejected such a scheme out of hand partly for this reason and also because the minority Labour government was facing concerted opposition on a series of fronts. The then head of the government's policy unit, Bernard Donoughue, confirmed that the Government had considered the broad themes contained within the Minority Report.[487] Yet, Callaghan doubted that any scheme which involved giving financial assistance to the press would have been "...ever a runner..." under his administration. Reasons for this, he agreed, included that the Royal Commission, which had been instituted by the Labour government, had rejected such reforms. Also, it was granted, as has been suggested, that press businesses and editors did not support such

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[484] O'Malley: 95
[485] *Ibid.*: 95, Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 73.
[486] "They were saying: 'Well of, of course, you do realise that as soon as the Government put forward this kind of legislation there would be a huge outcry from the Conservative press and you would be thrust back into a terrific argument about the whole nature of freedom of censorship and state control of the media.'" (Personal interview with Geoffrey Goodman, August 1 2001).
[487] Bernard Donoughue (now Lord Donoughue), private correspondence with the thesis's author, June 3 2001.

proposals.[488] He also indicated that the Government's parliamentary position was too precarious for such radical reform to be tackled.[489] As Bernard Donoughue told the author, it was "... felt that with all his problems and without a Commons majority, it was prudent not to open ... another front."[490] In addition, Callaghan regarded proposals for state assistance to the press as simply unviable.[491] The experience in Scandinavia, we have seen, challenges this assessment.

The Government also had the commission's recommendations before them. The commissioners recommended tightening up monopoly and mergers law.[492] As we have seen, they also called for protection for journalists from editorial and press business interference and for journalistic involvement in the election of editors.

Yet, the Labour government's approach to even these limited demands was to shelve them. After taking a year to make a response, trade minister Michael Meacher indicated that the question of the press charter was still being dealt with.[493] In addition, Meacher merely noted: "The other recommendations are under consideration."[494] With these words, the Labour government dismissed years of commission deliberations.

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[488] James Callaghan (now Lord Callaghan), private correspondence with the thesis's author, June 12 2001.
[489] On this point see Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 73.
[490] Donoughue private correspondence.
[491] Callaghan private correspondence.
[492] The onus of proof would be shifted. A merger would be refused unless it were proved that it would not operate against the public interest. Commissioners also recommended that the circulation limit of newspaper groups that would require investigation when involved in mergers would be cut. (Royal Commission on the Press: 135-7).
[493] HOC 4 December 1978, Vol 959, col. 480-1. The government also considered the question of press cross-ownership in broadcasting separately in a 1978 White Paper. Although there was less emphasis on this question in the Labour Party, the Royal Commission had recommended that no combination of newspaper companies should be allowed to control a TV company. The commissioners also called for press firms to be stopped from being represented on the boards of independent TV or radio stations which they had interests. The Government recommended in its White Paper to tighten up the rules. These merely stipulated that it could terminate a TV company contract if it was considered that a newspaper shareholding was leading to "...a situation which is contrary to the public interest." The Labour administration tentatively backed the commission recommendations on press firm representation on the boards of broadcasters and that press firms should not have overall control of TV stations. (Great Britain Home, Office. 1978. Broadcasting. London: H.M.S.O.: 51-3).
[494] HOC 4 December 1978, Vol 959, col. 480-1. The ex-university lecturer and former close ally of Tony Benn, Meacher was an industry minister under Benn and health and social security minister in the 1974 Labour government. He became a trade minister in 1976. From 1978 to 1983, he was the chair of the pro-activist Labour Coordinating Committee. After 1979, he was associated with activist backlash against the Callaghan government. He stood for deputy leader in lieu of the electorally defeated Tony Benn as the left

THE 1979 MANIFESTO

The Labour election manifesto of 1979 was short and the discussion on the media much shorter. There was nothing specifically written about the press. For the media as a whole, all the British people were told about Labour's plans was that: "Our aim is to safeguard freedom of expression; to encourage diversity; and to guard both against the dangers of government and commercial control."[495] It might be felt that these were laudable sentiments as far as they went. But that was not very far. The proposals for diversity had been reduced to a pious wish. And the method identified for achieving this, involving government intervention, was positively disencouraged. All mention of internal press democracy was also expunged.

Why was this? One answer was that discussion on the media in the NEC's Home Policy Committee after Callaghan assumed office had tended to concentrate on broadcasting. This was in the absence of a media sub-committee. Regarding the press, eyes were focussed on the Royal Commission. The do-little response from the Labour government evinced little reaction from the NEC's committees. It was left until when Labour was back in opposition for this to happen.

Of overriding importance, however, was that policy agreed by the party conference on a whole range of issues had not made it into the manifesto. The way that policy was made was that the NEC prepared it based on submissions from groups such as the media study group. This went to conference to be voted on. Clause V of Labour's constitution

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candidate. Meacher was elected onto the Shadow Cabinet in 1983. He had split from what is now known as the 'hard left' in 1985, developing a 'soft-left' grouping in the Shadow Cabinet. He became chief opposition spokesman in areas such as health and social security, employment, overseas development, transport, employment and environment protection. He was Minister for the Environment from 1997 to 2003. (2000. *Dod's parliamentary companion.*: 623, Roth, Andrew, and Byron Criddle. 2000. *1997-2002 parliamentary profiles*. London: Parliamentary Profiles.:1525-1532).

[495] Dale, Iain, and Party Labour. 2000. *Labour Party general election manifestos, 1900-1997*. London: Routledge : Politico's Publishing.: 181.

stipulated that the NEC and Cabinet or Shadow Cabinet would jointly draw up the manifesto from this.[496]

In 1976, the NEC presented *Labour's Programme for Britain*, which was agreed by the party's conference. This was meant to be the basis for the election manifesto. The 1976 programme did not have a detailed section on the press. Yet, it succinctly reiterated Labour's conference policy commitments.[497] For two years before the 1979 election, the election sub-committees of the Cabinet and the NEC had been meeting and drafts had already been worked out. The media was one of the areas discussed, according to the head of the party's research department at the time.[498] Yet, the day after the government's defeat in a vote of confidence, which made an election inevitable, officials at No. 10 revealed their own draft manifesto, which became the basis of discussions.[499]

Callaghan dominated the Clause V drafting committee and insisted that the less radical No.10 proposals should prevail.[500] He, in effect, employed a veto, which the left protested had no basis in the party's constitution.[501] Policies previously agreed by party conferences were jettisoned or ignored.[502] Commentators have not identified the media proposals as key to this process.[503] Yet, in axing the radical commitments and cutting the word length, the party's commitment to press reform dwindled.

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[496] Seyd, Patrick. 1987. *The rise and fall of the Labour left*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Education., Benn, Tony, and Chris Mullin. 1982. *Arguments for democracy*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.: 182.

[497] Labour Party, Conference. 1976. *Labour's programme for Britain : annual conference 1976*. London: Labour Party., 105.

[498] Geoff Bish, 'The Manifesto' in Barratt-Brown, Michael, Ken Coates, and Control Institute for Workers, 1979. *What went wrong : explaining the fall of the Labour Government*. Nottingham: Spokesman Books for the Institute for Workers' Control.: 187-195, Seyd: 122, Benn, *Arguments for democracy*: 182.

[499] This had not been discussed with the Cabinet or the NEC. The document based on years of debate in the party was not discussed at the formal meeting of the NEC and the Cabinet, which was meant to agree the manifesto. (Bish, Manifesto: 686-7).

[500] Morgan, *Callaghan*: 687, Benn, *Arguments for democracy*: 182, Benn, *Conflicts of interest*: 480-2.

[501] Benn, *Arguments for democracy*: 182.

[502] Seyd: 122, Benn, *Arguments for democracy*: 182.

[503] Morgan, *Callaghan*: 687-8, Seyd: 122-3.

CONCLUSION

Thus, we have seen there was a clear division between the position of the Labour Party and that of its government from the first few months onwards of the administration. The Labour Party's plans to facilitate diversity in the press, influenced by Scandinavian social democratic and social market practice, were not acted upon by the Labour leadership. Leading members of the Wilson government had indicated diversity was required. While the administration did not support the party's interventionist plans, there was a tension in the leadership's thought as to whether some sort of press reform was possible and desirable. This was prompted by a shared belief that the press was biased against the Labour movement. These were among the reasons why it set up the Royal Commission. Extensive Labour Party policy had been developed in this period. Yet, under the Callaghan administration, this was rejected and the 1979 manifesto had little in the way of positive commitments either for diversity or for participatory democracy.

The fact that Labour Party conference supported strongly interventionist proposals yet a Labour administration did not implement them, appears to challenge the pluralist viewpoint regarding policy formation. The evidence we have amassed suggests that the party's plans faced huge obstacles to being accepted by the Labour government. Undoubtedly significant was the hostility of influential employers and editors to Labour's reforms, which would seem to accord with a Marxist analysis. We have dealt with the fallacies behind many of the press firms' objections as they were expressed.

However, this is not the whole story. What is also important to register at this stage was some of these objections were shared by parts of the Labour movement. Many of the unions that would have been directly involved in the implementation of the reforms were less than enthusiastic about all the proposals. The TUC itself only supported some of the plans. We will discuss the theoretical implications of this further in Chapter 4. Equally, we have seen that other forms of intervention may have commanded more support within the party, rather than a revenue board.

The influence of the NEC was also important in the policy that was presented publicly. Firstly, the party's position had been primarily formulated under the auspices of one of the NEC's subcommittees. Secondly, later, the NEC representatives played a dual role. On the one hand, they were prepared to back the party policy. But, also, they did not support the party's position wholeheartedly. They gave the impression that the party was not firmly committed to a central proposal – the advertising revenue board. They also downplayed the role of a printing corporation, which was given more prominent support in the party motion. This reflected a lack of confidence in the proposals, which the commissioners discerned.

As it was, a minority of the commissioners outlined their support for interventionism by supporting a national printing corporation, funded by the government. The NEC decided to back this to the extent of publishing the Minority Report, while indicating that its recommendations did "not go as far" those advocated by the party. In one sense this was true. Creating a printing corporation would not have dealt as directly with advertising's problematic role.

So, policy formation in this sense seems to also accord strongly with Minkin's formulation, where the party conference, the NEC and the unions all played a part. They were all involved in pressing for a policy, yet divided over what was needed.

Nevertheless, it also accords with the position of the elitists and the Marxists; in that the leadership was predominant in creating policy, as it spurned the party conference proposals. Of these three positions, there is some indication that the Marxists' analysis can in some ways explain the facts more fully because of its emphasis on external influences on leadership policy-making, particularly capitalism's operation. The leadership had distanced itself from the party's proposals. By 1978, when any decision on implementing policy would need to be made, the Labour government was also fighting for its survival across a number of fronts, as previously indicated. Along with its failure to get unions to agree to pay restraint, it was implementing IMF-induced public spending cuts. It did not even possess a parliamentary majority. The Government had already

witnessed the huge press opposition to its closed shop legislation, which it had enacted under union pressure.

As we have seen, in such a situation, after experiencing the such strong hostility, the Government would not have welcomed a battle with the powerful press businesses and the advertising industry, which had made their hostility to interventionist plans clear. This was especially true, as the Government required the support of newspaper firms, as its problems mounted. In addition, the Government-appointed Royal Commission had rejected Labour's plans and there was no massive external groundswell of support for any such measures from the mass of journalists, as opposed to individuals and the NUJ.[504]

In addition, it was also true that such plans for the press ran counter to the whole direction in which the Labour government was moving. As we saw, part of the Labour government's retreat had been to abandon Keynesian interventionism. In such a situation, it was less likely to adopt a brand of radical interventionism as represented by an advertising revenue board or a national printing corporation. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that an embattled Labour government did not grab the opportunity to enact legislation.

The emphasis on Labour movement representation rather than diversity also played a part. The plans were heavily predicated on the idea that the press was biased against the Labour movement. The party's aim was more centred on providing a space for a Labour movement press. The question of delivering diversity to aid democracy – associated with thinkers such as Habermas, for instance, and New Left advocates in the party – was a related, but mainly secondary, aspect. The question of diversity and democracy received more emphasis in the party's conference position – formally the party's policy. But it was emphasised less by the NEC and its representatives to the Royal Commission on the Press. In making the question of creating a space for a Labour movement press more prominent, Labour's demands had an element of 'special pleading'. Nevertheless, whether another emphasis would have affected their reception is debatable.

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[504] Curran interview.

However, if the plans had been implemented by the Labour government and had been successful, along with making a Labour press more achievable, they would have gone some way to strengthening democratic life in Britain. Nevertheless, while many objections to the plans can be seen to be wide of the mark, their attempt to go beyond the Scandinavian social market paradigm meant that there was a potential over-reliance on a supposedly all-knowing state. There was less consideration of the role of both workers in the press industry and, importantly, the wider community as a potential corrective check and balance.

The demands made by the Labour Party to seek participative democratic ownership of the press industry were hazy and not prominently made. They reflected the tensions created by the influence that left social democratic and New Left ideas – including those associated with Marxists such as Raymond Williams – had had on social market conceptions. The Labour Party conference policy and the Minority Report had gone beyond merely stressing the question of industrial democracy to cautiously considering broader community democratic participation. This echoed radical democratic notions, Curran's later social market conception and, minimally, some Marxist notions, bereft of their revolutionary connotations. Yet, this was not generally reflected in Labour's public position. The NEC's proposals to the Royal commission, limited as they were, centred on industrial democracy within the press. The TUC and some media unions backed this emphasis. This accent on workplace democracy, emphasised in Williams' New Leftist model and some other Marxist conceptions, excluded the democratic involvement of other constituent groups, such as newspaper readers.

The involvement of the Labour government in the closed shop legislation highlighted this gap in Labour's plans. It was shown that greater industrial democracy had the potential to lead to a *decrease* in public democratic participation and access. Importantly for the implementation of such proposals by a Labour administration, the Government's experience in piloting the legislation indicated the hostility of the newspaper firms and

editors to industrial democracy. The *Scottish Daily News*'s failure also stifled enthusiasm for this.

As with the other interventionist proposals, by the time that the Callaghan government had the Royal Commission report that called for limited journalistic involvement and the Minority Report which went much further, the tide was turning. The corporatist era, which had seen the development of the Bullock report on industrial democracy – where such ideas as workers' control were considered, if not acted upon – was ending.[505] Again, the proposals for democracy across all industry faced intense employer opposition and Labour movement division.[506] It is not surprising that the press democracy plans died with them.

Nevertheless, as we shall see in the next chapter, as Labour went into opposition following the 1979 election defeat, two themes we have highlighted here would be readdressed. Labour campaigners would consider representation in a new light, as they would develop new ideas aimed at providing a press that was more representative of the political range of opinions in society. Also, the role of community participation in the press and workplace democracy would come further to the forefront as campaigns for the right of reply gained momentum.

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[505] Curran, Press Reformism: 48.
[506] Gospel Howard, F., and Gill Palmer. 1993. *British industrial relations*. London ; New York, NY: Routledge.: 245-6, Kessler, Sidney, and Fred Bayliss. 1995. *Contemporary British industrial relations*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Business.: 115.

5. Flow and Ebb: Labour from 1979-1983

INTRODUCTION

The years from 1979 to 1983 saw exciting change within the Labour Party. Press policy was no exception. In 1979, Labour made no specific promise to act on the press. Yet, the 1983 manifesto represented a solid commitment to diversifying newspaper ownership, the like of which had not been seen in a Labour election address.

This chapter will uncover how the failure to include the party's conference policy on press reform in the 1979 manifesto was part of a wider development. That included the rise of demands for constitutional reforms, the debates on the market and planning, democratic control and internationalisation of the economy.

We shall consider how the period after 1979 saw the party conference consolidate positions to promote press diversity previously taken by parts of the party in an attempt to aid political democracy. From this, we shall view how key party thinkers went beyond these ideas in a failed attempt to apply a public service broadcasting paradigm to transform the press landscape. We shall also look at the party's attempts to push for press diversity while in opposition. The chapter will analyse how this exposed tensions between those in the Labour movement advancing plurality and those more interested in promoting a Labour movement press. We shall also consider why the scheme promoted by the Media Study Group failed to make it into the manifesto, leaving a gap in policy.

The chapter will also explore how the demands for constitutional change influenced thinking on democratic accountability in the press. It will chronicle how the initial pressure for democratic ownership of newspapers was dashed, as concern about a press backlash strengthened. Instead, the appendix will consider how, rather than calling for the press industry to be restructured to combat bias, demands for democratic control became limited to calls for a right of reply. Nevertheless, the chapter shall argue that, on diversity

at least, the 1983 manifesto represented a radical departure from the previous one and, if it had been implemented, would have transformed the press environment.

PARTY POLICY FROM 1979-1983

By 1979, a battle was brewing. A swathe of party activists pointed to a long-term process of membership disenfranchisement, which we saw was reflected in the Minority Report's rejection and Clause V's failure to deliver manifesto press policies. With their ranks swelled by new recruits who did not share traditional labourist deference, they demanded increased accountability.[507] The high-profile talisman in this clash was the Home Policy committee chair and long-time press policy activist, Tony Benn.[508] The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy (CLPD) spearheaded it.[509]

The left, CLPD and the left-dominated NEC championed the demand to give the NEC control over determining the manifesto, to avoid a repeat of 1979. The left effectively failed in realising this demand. It experienced more success with its proposals for mandatory MP reselection and for electing the leader.[510] Pre-empting this latter decision, Callaghan resigned in 1980 and Foot replaced him.[511] Although Foot came from the left, he had opposed the Bennite New Left project and the constitutional demands.[512]

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[507] Shaw, Eric. 1994. *The Labour Party since 1979 : crisis and transformation.* London ; New York: Routledge.: 20. The depth of this sense of betrayal by the 1974 Labour government went was shown by the fact that the party's own general secretary Ron Hayward told the 1980 Labour Party conference: "I wish our ministers would sometimes act in our interests like a Tory Prime Minister acts in their interests." (Hattersley, Roy. 1995. *Who goes home? : scenes from a political life.* London: Little Brown & Co.: 221).

[508] After the joint Cabinet-NEC drafting meeting, Benn felt betrayed and vowed that: "[T]he battle to democratise the Party has to start now." (Benn, *Conflicts of interest*: 488, 489).

[509] Its concerns were predominantly with internal party reform. Set up in 1973, its raison d'etre was to organise so that conference decisions would be put into practice.

[510] Labour Party, Conference (Ed.). 1979. *Report of the seventyeighth annual conference of the Labour Party, Brighton, 1979, October 1-5.* London: The Party.: 275, 455, Labour Party, Conference (Ed.). 1980. *Report of the annual conference and special conference of the Labour Party, 1980.* London: The Party.: 143-8, Labour Party, Conference (Ed.). 1981. *Report of the annual conference of the Labour Party.* London: Labour Party.: 206-212, Denis Kavanagh, 'Labour Party Manifestos 1900-1917' in Dale: 4, Seyd: 123.

[511] Kogan, David, and Maurice Kogan. 1982. *The battle for the Labour Party.* London: Kogan Page.: 98-9.

[512] Panitch and Leys: 192. See also Kogan and Kogan, Benn, *The end of an era*: 4.

As part of the organisational reforms, Labour revamped the NEC's policy-making consultation procedure to encourage wider discussion in the party. But this would involve a cumbersome and lengthy process, affecting press policy development.[513]

The democratic accountability upsurge interlinked with demands for state intervention and economic control from its start. The collapse of Keynesian welfarism as Labour's governing ideology had found the party's right temporarily bereft of ideas and demoralised. As the leadership's organisational control over the party disintegrated after 1979, it lost its veto powers over NEC policies, such as those regarding interventionism and the AES, which the left had been developing on the NEC since the early 1970s.[514]

Some on the left saw party democratic accountability as part of the wider debate on democratising the state. While their influence at this time should not be overstated, two of the extra-party groupings vying for ideological influence on the Labour left were concerned with both this question and that of the media. Both had a relationship to the New Left tradition. One, which we shall consider in the next chapter, was a grouping that was known by the British Communist Party journal it produced, *Marxism Today*. Another was the trend symbolised by the group called the Institute for Workers' Control (IWC).[515]

One important aspect to be considered is how the left's concentration on internal democratic reform affected the reception of the NEC's radical ideas among the wider electorate. Relatively few outside the party knew or understood the left's economic analysis. Prior to 1979, the NEC had silenced itself. After 1979, the NEC and party

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[513] As before, sub-committees, such as that on the media would be set into motion after a conference resolution was passed at the behest of the Home Policy Committee. When it was considered "helpful", the NEC would publish a consultation document, which would identify the study's scope and ask for information and ideas. This would be sent to all party branches and affiliates. After this, studies by the sub-committees were envisaged to take up to two years. Following this, the study document would be published. Branches and constituency parties were encouraged to discuss and respond to the NEC, but not take formal decisions. On the basis of the responses, the NEC would draw up a draft statement, which would be submitted to conference for approval. (RD: 260, 'New Consultation Procedure' February 1980).

[514] Shaw, *1979*: 6-9.

[515] The figure most associated with it, Ken Coates, was a member of Benn's 'kitchen cabinet' after 1980 (Benn, *The end of an era*, Panitch and Leys: 190).

activists sidelined this policy-propagating role, as the campaigns around internal democracy took precedence.[516]

In contrast, after it had abandoned Keynesianism, the social democratic right retreated from the ideological debate at the conference and on the NEC. Instead, it saw the press as a weapon in its counter-offensive – using its contacts to discredit the left.[517] This both brought the right and some newspapers closer and could not but reinforce the view of the importance of gaining Labour representation through the existing press.

The left's challenge within the national party reached its peak with Benn's narrow defeat in his bid to become deputy leader at the 1981 conference. After this, the NEC pressure for constitutional reform prompted a TUC leadership backlash. The right also started reorganising. This indicated that the union leadership, while publicly supporting the left's policies, was also prepared to challenge its organisational influence.[518] Finally, the right removed Benn as chair of the important Home Policy committee in 1982 and cohorts like Frank Allaun were also ejected from key NEC committees.[519] Although Benn carried on chairing the Media Study Group, which we shall consider, his influence on the NEC was much reduced.

By 1983, the left was defeated on policies for industrial democracy and interventionism. *Labour's Programme 1982* saw an extensive statement of the AES strategy, including on democratic planning. However, by 1983, calls for workers' control retreated from their influential high point with the Bullock Report.[520]

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[516] Panitch and Leys: 155, 157-60, 163.

[517] Shaw, Eric. 1988. *Discipline and discord in the Labour Party : the politics of managerial control in the Labour Party, 1951-87*. Manchester: Manchester University Press: 246, cited in Panitch and Leys: 167. See also 145. *Really bad news* detailed the bias towards the Labour right and against the left in the broadcast media. Benn and the left were attacked bitterly in the press. (See Philo, Greg, and Group Glasgow University Media. 1982. *Really bad news*. London ; New York: Writers & Readers., Hollingsworth, Mark. 1986. *The press and political dissent*. London: Pluto.: 37-76).

[518] The NEC stood up to an early challenge by a high-level union delegation in 1979. However, between 1981 and 1982, the trade union right organised a purge of left from the union and women's sections on the NEC. The right-wing Solidarity group of MPs also formed to oppose the constitutional changes in this period. (Benn, *Conflicts of interest*: 530-1, Panitch and Leys: 178-80, Hattersley, *Who goes home?*: 235-6, Kogan and Kogan: 107).

[519] Benn, *The end of an era*: 247, 251, Kogan and Kogan: 153-4, Panitch and Leys: 199-200.

[520] The party supported power sharing in industry, rather than workers' control. (Shaw, *1979*: 12).

The party's retreat on interventionism was more evident by the 1983 manifesto. The manifesto was not a wholly Bennite document. Instead, it represented a compromise between the Keynesianism of Shore and Foot, and Bennite interventionism. Demands for increased state involvement and industrial democracy were more muted.[521] Nevertheless, despite the right's NEC dominance, the AES still influenced the document.[522]

The influx of left supporters at first obscured this shift to the right. They had been recruited in the wake of the Benn deputy leadership campaign.[523] There was also the growth of municipal socialism. However, these developments also provided grist to the mill for a right-wing backlash.[524]

The left's success in changing Labour's constitution convinced a section of the social democratic right that they should split from the party. They were not prepared to see constituency members determine policy. This schism was to cost the party dearly in electoral support, as former Labour voters were seduced into supporting the new party, the SDP.[525] The assault on the left and the battles over the constitution had distracted Labour from the task of being elected.[526] As it was, facing a Liberal-SDP Alliance, as well as the Conservative Party, which had been buoyed up by the Falklands adventure,

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[521] In contrast to demands of the early 1970s, where the left advocated public ownership of key areas of manufacturing, the manifesto saw that state regulation would operate mainly within a privately-owned economy. Also, the demands for industrial democracy were less radical than had been called for previously. (Shaw, *1979*: 12-14).

[522] The right-winger John Golding, as the new head of the Home Policy subcommittee, saw that Labour was heading for a large defeat. He thought it best that the 1983 manifesto be associated with some left-wing ideas, so that the left would be identified with that result. (Hattersley, *Who goes home?*: 238). Benn accepted at face value that Golding pushed forward a manifesto that the right-winger disagreed with. (Benn, *The end of an era*: 286-7).

[523] Panitch and Leys: 200.

[524] Benn, *The end of an era*: 230-1, Kogan and Kogan: 130-139, 144-51, Panitch and Leys: 200-3.

[525] Soon after the Wembley special conference in January 1981, which decided the method for selecting the leader, those MPs central to forming the SDP made the Limehouse Declaration. Two months later, the party was born.

[526] Shaw, *1979*: 26. An indication of the dominance of the expulsions was that as late as November 1982 Benn could note in his diaries of the party's Organisation Committee: "We devoted three hours to discipline in the Party considering the cases of Tariq Ali, Peter Tatchell and the Militant Tendency – no discussion about the Election at all...". (Benn, *The end of an era*: 251).

the party ended up polling only 28 per cent. This was a mere two per cent more than the Alliance.

PRESS REFORM, DEMOCRACY, THE AES AND THE 1979 PARTY CONFERENCE

The concentration on democratic accountability in the Labour Party and the state gave discussions on the press, and the media generally, an added impetus. New Left-influenced activists saw press reform as an aid to democracy, as well as Labour representation.

This was indicated by the post-defeat 1979 conference. This again called for newspaper ownership reform, which was explicitly coupled with the debate on party democracy.[527] The conference motion was challenging in both analysis and prescriptions. By consolidating what had gone before and combining policy transfer with innovation, it put forward one of the more radical European social democratic press policies.[528] Alongside calls to aid diversity, it demanded a national debate on alternatives for democratic control, a right of reply and discussed calls for a Labour movement newspaper – all of which we will consider later. It also set in motion the procedure for reassembling a NEC media sub-committee to consider these questions.[529]

The Labour left, at this time, also considered this notion of newspaper reform as an aid to democracy. One of the original architects of the AES, Francis Cripps wrote in 1981 that the press and media operated as part of a system of passive political democracy. [530] Professional leaders used the media to propose their policies to a passive electorate. The

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[527] The motion's mover, the SOGAT president Bill Keys, on behalf of the union, linked press ownership with the constitutional changes. (Labour Party, *Conference 1979*: 384).

[528] It encompassed both the demand for diversity and increased democratic control with the call for increased Labour representation though a Labour movement newspaper. The motion reiterated the positions previously taken by the party and incorporated with them support for the Minority Report proposals, as well as those from *The people and the media*. It supported the minority's conception of a launch fund for new publications, a National Printing Corporation and Producer Press Co-operatives. It also backed the party's previous position of an Advertising Revenue Board.

[529] Labour Party, *Conference 1979*: 383-5.

[530] Francis Cripps was economic adviser to Benn from 1974-9. The grandson of former Labour Chancellor Stafford Cripps, he was a founder member of the Cambridge Economic Policy Group. (Benn, *Conflicts of interest*: 510, 605).

media acted as "...as a deeply conservative filter of opinions". [531] We can question this view on the enormity of media power.[532] Yet, it should be noted that the press and media were seen as a potential aid to different forms of political democracy. However, it was viewed that they were being wielded as a weapon for a particularly elitist form of political democracy, which denied active participation.

THE MEDIA STUDY GROUP

A new study group, as a subcommittee of the NEC's Home Policy committee, was set up in the year following the 1979 conference. Chaired by the MP Allaun, its explicit aim was to develop policy on diversity and democratic ownership and control. Following the frustration with the findings of the majority on the Royal Commission, the committee's explicit aim was to prove that public intervention in the press was both practically and politically possible.[533] The study group included left-of-centre MPs such as Benn, Meacher, Joan Maynard, Ernie Ross, Eric Heffer, Jo Richardson and Stuart Holland.[534] Only a minority including Philip Whitehead and Austin Mitchell were not clearly associated with the left.[535] Trade unionists involved included: from the printing unions,

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[531] Panitch and Leys: 170-1, Cripps, Francis. 1981. "The British Crisis – Can the British Win?" *New Left Review* July-August 1981.: 96-7.

[532] After all, if the media was such a conservative filter and had such power to sway opinion then a Labour government would not have been elected in 1945, faced with a virulent campaign by the majority of the press.

[533] RD409: 'Media Study Group Programme of Work', May 1980.

[534] The economist Stuart Holland was a personal assistant to Harold Wilson while he was Prime Minister between 1967-8 and to Judith Hart when she was Overseas Development minister in 1974-5. He became a Sussex University lecturer in 1971. He was the author of a series of books on economic planning and the role of the state. He became an MP in 1979 and was associated with the left. (1983. *Dod's parliamentary companion.*: 414, Roth, Andrew, Janice Kerbey, Judy Tench, and Commons Great Britain Parliament House of. 1984. *Parliamentary profiles*. London: Parliamentary Profile Services.: 374) He was one of Benn's 'kitchen cabinet' in this period. (Benn, *The end of an era* and Panitch and Leys: 190).

[535] Philip Whitehead was a BBC producer and editor of Thames TV's This Week programme in the 1960s, before being an MP between 1970 and 1983. (1983. *Dod's parliamentary companion.*: 514,Roth, Andrew, and Commons Great Britain Parliament House of. 1979. *The MP's chart*. London: Parliamentary Profiles.) He was formerly active in Free Communications Group. (Neal Ascherson, Correspondence with the author, 24th April 2001). Whitehead was a member of the Annan Committee on the Future of Broadcasting from 1974-1977. (1983. *Dod's parliamentary companion.*: 514, Roth, Andrew, and Commons Great Britain Parliament House of. 1979. *The MP's chart*. London: Parliamentary Profiles.). An award-winning television producer, he became a MEP in 1994. (Morgan, Robert. 1994. *The Times guide to the European Parliament 1994*. London: Times Books.: 261). A former university lecturer and television journalist, Austin Mitchell was the treasurer of the right-wing pressure group Labour Solidarity in the period from 1981 to 1984. A supporter of Kinnock and then Bryan Gould in the 1980s and 1990s, he was a presenter on

Ted O'Brien; from the broadcasting unions, Alan Sapper; from the NUJ, Ivor Gaber; and Brendan Barber, who would much later become TUC General Secretary. Academics involved included Curran, Nicholas Garnham and Greg Philo. Labour movement journalists were also involved, such as *Tribune*'s Chris Mullin and Richard Clements and *Labour Weekly*'s Harold Frayman, as well as mainstream journalists such as Baistow and Goodman.[536]

Beyond Diversity: The Independent Press Authority

A more specific reason why press and media reform was on the agenda, rather than its association with democratic accountability, as Cripps envisaged it, was that the Labour movement again felt itself under attack. The 1979 election had seen the *Sun* join the ranks of the "...anti-Labour chorus...", which treated Callaghan's middle-of-the-road programme as "...a reworking of the Communist Manifesto...", as one commentator put it.[537] And the Glasgow University Media Group, though concerned with broadcasting, had focussed attention on the question of media bias against the trade union movement.[538] An indication of Labour's attitude to the media was that, according to Benn, the biggest cheer in response to his speech to the 1980 special *Peace, Jobs, Freedom* conference

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BSkyB from 1989-1998. He joined the Left-wing Campaign Group in 1999. (Roth, Andrew, and Byron Criddle. 2000. *1997-2002 parliamentary profiles*. London: Parliamentary Profiles.: 1557-1564).

[536] Chris Mullin was formerly a foreign correspondent, who became editor of *Tribune* between 1982 and 1984, associating it clearly with the left. He was a key activist in CLPD and after 1979, he was associated with the backlash against the Callaghan government, penning the book *How to Select and Reselect Your MP*. He was close to Tony Benn, editing two of his books. He became an MP in 1987. Author and campaigner on miscarriages of justice, he has also written a series of political novels including *A Very British Coup*. (Roth, Andrew, and Byron Criddle. 2000. *1997-2002 parliamentary profiles*. London: Parliamentary Profiles.: 1613-1621, Benn, *The end of an era*: 636). He was associated with the left-wing Socialist Campaign Group of MPs and campaigned in the 1990s against media monopolisation. Blair appointed him a junior environment minister in 1999. (Roth, Andrew, and Byron Criddle. 2000. *1997-2002 parliamentary profiles*. London: Parliamentary Profiles.: 1613-1621). He left the government in 2001. Harold Frayman was also the founding editor of the Campaign for Press Freedom's journal *Free Press* and became the CPF's treasurer (Anon. 'Press On', *Free Press*, No. 1, February 1980 and CPF AGM and Conference May 24 1980 (internal minutes of the campaign).

[537] Greenslade, *Press Gang*: 359-361.

[538] By 1980, it had produced two books. (Beharrell, Peter, and Group University of Glasgow Media. 1976. *Bad news*. London ; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul., Beharrell, Peter, and Group Glasgow University Media. 1980. *More bad news*. London ; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.).

came when he quoted from the academics' work.[539] Equally, in 1980, the TUC published the pamphlet *Behind the Headlines*. It saw the press as distorted. The TUC considered that newspaper bias against the Labour movement was a key factor in the 1979 election result.[540]

As we saw, Labour Party policy had treated diversity and Labour representation as practically synonymous. If you considered one you would be considering the other. However, we have seen that this obscured important differences.

If Labour's schemes for diversity aimed at merely creating greater political parity in the press, then it can be argued that they were rather blunt instruments. While it can be indicated that the schemes to modify the advertising market would have made a Labour movement press more possible, this would not guarantee greater political equivalence. Increased diversity could well also entail a greater plurality of right-of-centre newspapers, for instance. Such schemes for diversity were unlikely to have a predictable political effect.

Yet, such was the radical confidence at this time, that there was a wish to go beyond the existing policies for diversity to provide a press more representative of public opinion. This echoed the demands for democratic representation within the party. Two similar new schemes went beyond achieving diversity to attempt to use the state to eradicate bias. One aimed to do this by imposing balance, the other by orchestrating the representation of different viewpoints. In doing so, they indicated some of the complex problems of representation. They also illuminated some of the deep difficulties in using the state to go beyond diversity. Not least, they indicated the problems with attempting to provide balance.

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[539] Benn, *Conflicts of interest*: 600.

[540] The Conservative victory was due "...less to the merits of a monetarist economic policy than to the millstone labelled 'winter of discontent' lovingly sculpted by the media and then hung round the neck of the Labour Government." (Trades Union, Congress. 1980. *Behind the headlines : TUC discussion document on the media.* London: Trades Union Congress.: 5, 6, 8).

The two schemes for an Independent Press Authority (IPA) devised by committee members represented a huge incursion into press business control. Both were firmly within the public service tradition; Chris Mullin and Michael Meacher regarded broadcast regulation as the model for the press.[541] As they wished to bring the public service tradition into a commercial sector, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) provided an obvious prototype, which they utilised.[542] Both proposals envisaged there being a franchise system similar to that operated by the IBA. Newspaper groups would then bid to be part of the system.

Mullin's 1981 proposals have been rightly identified as the more transformative of ownership of the two.[543] His proposals concentrated on providing balance by organising the press into a range of viewpoints and had a greater emphasis on industrial democracy than Meacher's scheme. His plan required restructuring the press into a plurality of franchised groups, each representing a different opinion. In his scheme, franchises would be tendered for, with the preference being for companies without commercial interests or for ownership groupings in which staff were represented or would wholly own. The franchises would be for profitable groups combining both lucrative and loss-making titles.[544] This 'piggy-backing' was aimed at counteracting the effects of advertising revenue on newspapers.[545] Mullin's proposal would impose rather stringent norms for newspapers under this franchise system, including an imposition on the proportion of current affairs reporting, which could have affected the tabloids.[546]

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[541] Curran, Different approaches: 99, Curran and Seaton: 338.
[542] Curran identifies that the proposal for an IPA originated with Stuart Holland in a book produced as a repost to what was seen as the inadequacy of the previous Royal Commission's proposals. However, in turn, Holland, in that work, distinguishes Jeremy Tunstall's evidence to the Royal Commission as a precedent for his model. (Curran, Different approaches: 99, Holland, Countervailing Press Power: 114).
[543] Curran, Different approaches: 99-100, Curran and Seaton: 338, Curran, *Policy for the press*: 13.
[544] As we shall see, the Government justified its refusal to refer the News International buy-out to the Monopolies Commission by claiming that the *Times* and *Sunday Times* were loss-makers.
[545] Curran, Different approaches: 99-100, Curran and Seaton: 338, Curran, *Policy for the press*: 13.
[546] Mullin called for the Government-appointed body to ensure that a specific percentage of editorial content be allotted to current affairs. Generally, the study group debate was punctuated by calls for a more politicised press, which decried the role of entertainment in newspapers. It was portrayed as if entertaining was not a legitimate role for the popular press to pursue. The discussion was at times patronising, as campaigners decried the role of bingo and 'spot the ball' in the press. (RD 1073, Philip Elliot, 'Notes on Media Policy').

By 1982, in tandem with the shifts happening in the NEC as a whole, a less radical scheme was proposed which showed some similarities to Mullin's. Michael Meacher's proposals took from the IBA the idea that a regulating authority should maintain balance within each press outlet, rather than Mullin's idea to balance up through diversity. Thus, Meacher argued for the Press Council to be replaced by an IPA, whose role would be to ensure balance in a similar way as happened in broadcasting.

To do this, the IPA would award franchises to newspapers. Whether it would renew these franchises depended on if the newspapers had achieved certain standards. Central to this would be that each newspaper would provide a balance of views in their news and opinion. This would not be required in every issue, but over a period. This IPA, or a revamped Press Council, would also have increased powers to oversee day-to-day bias claims.[547] Thus, it would be involved in the area of the right of reply, which we shall consider in the appendix to this chapter.

Problems with the proposals

These were ingenious schemes. However, they were riddled with potential difficulties.[548] Firstly, the IPA would be imposing what it believed to be a balanced and plural diversity of press views. Yet, it is difficult to see on what basis this balance of views could be considered. Any other system than to replicate national voting patterns would be less democratic. However, this would tie the press to operating on party political lines.[549] This indicated another consideration with Mullin's scheme. If the narrower question of Labour

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[547] Meacher, Reform: 5-6.

[548] Curran identifies one alleged problem was that the justification for independent television franchising was bandwidth scarcity; thus not applicable to the press. (Curran, Different approaches: 100). This can be challenged, as barriers to market entry also constrained newspaper numbers. Indeed, we can add, it has been precisely technology-led abundance of TV broadcast space, exploding the 'useful myth' on which public service broadcasting rested, that has been used to justify calls for its abandonment. (Tracey: 53). Instead, Meacher defended his scheme on the basis that no other communication medium was as unregulated as the press. (Meacher, Reform: 5-6).

[549] This was also Militant's view. "We propose that a Labour government should nationalise the newspaper printing plant facilities, radio and TV. Access to these facilities should be given to political parties, in proportion to their votes at elections." (Taaffe, Peter. 1981. *What we Stand For.* London: Militant, 1981). For a critical discussion on this see Curran, *Policy for the press*: 14-15 and Curran and Seaton: 347.

Party representation is considered and we fast-forward to consider the newspaper landscape by the time Labour regained office in 1997, then it may be argued that the press had been balanced up without any such intervention. The 'problem' had been solved – with Labour even over-represented. However, then the question of democratic control of the press becomes pertinent, if representation requires a democratic input by those being represented, as was suggested in Chapter 1. Mullin does at least consider this. However, Mullin's solution, like others, was to promote solely worker control, alongside a right of reply.

Secondly, the proposals represented a huge state intrusion into the press. Mullin suggested to the study group that the IPA had the advantage that the idea of the IBA was already firmly established. The IPA 'merely' extended this idea. However, his proposals extended it into an area where it was already firmly established that newspapers could be created on any political basis; albeit with funding and the operation of advertising being huge obstacles to this freedom. His franchise system would determine the political colour and the balance between news, current affairs and other topics in individual newspapers.[550] They would be forced to either reverse the perceived right-wing bias by adopting an editorial line imposed by this state-backed organisation or lose their franchise. In Meacher's scheme, sizeable editorial control would be ceded from the titles to the new authority – as the newspapers would have to maintain balance and the state-linked IPA would oversee this. Those who are concerned now by Labour leadership attempts to control the media might be astonished to know that one of the targets of this manipulation, the Labour left, called for further control of the press by a state-funded source, in the name of balance.

Thirdly, another objection to Meacher's plans concerns the idea that press regulation should be modelled on broadcast legislation's controversial conception of balance.[551] It

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[550] NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 6th meeting', 19 January 1981.

[551] Various writers have disputed the broadcast authorities' provision of balance. (See, for example, Beharrell, Peter, and Group University of Glasgow Media. 1976. *Bad news*. London ; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul., Beharrell, Peter, and Group Glasgow University Media. 1980. *More bad news*. London ; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul., Philo, Greg, and Group Glasgow University Media. 1982. *Really bad news*. London ; New York: Writers & Readers.).

can be argued that the press should be treated differently. We saw in Chapter 1 that the British press was not constrained by ideas of balance. We also saw that this was not required for a functioning public sphere, where political democracy could flourish.[552] This meant the press could lead discussion and play an important role in agenda-setting. It can be debated whether readers find this to be part of national newspapers' appeal. The public would be very surprised if they woke up tomorrow to find no mainstream media source existed, apart from the Internet, which could articulate a consistent opinion and show a clear viewpoint. While newspapers should be open to a number of opinions, it seems important that a space be kept for this.

As it was, the majority of the study group rejected both schemes. The group did not think Mullin's ideas were feasible or that the public would accept the statist implications of Meacher's plans.[553] Instead, the study group supported another scheme – the Open Press Authority – that more clearly aimed at increasing diversity. We shall consider this in a moment. But the particular concern for Labour representation also articulated itself in other ways. By 1979, the question of providing a Labour movement press was more directly posed.

Signs of the *Times*: The Labour movement paper and the News International takeover

An indication of the division between those wanting a broader press and those wishing for a Labour movement title was that the Labour Party was far less involved in plans to provide a Labour press. After 1979, the Press and Publicity Committee and the NEC agreed in principle to facilitate it. Party officials discussed it with the TUC press committee. Yet, a 1979 Labour Party conference motion that called for a popular national

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[552] Habermas, *Transformation*: Street: 253.

[553] One view expressed about Mullin's scheme was that such a system would limit diversity to the restricted number of profitable franchises already available. It would hold back new launches. Group members felt that it would leave control of the press in some of the same hands as it was then. Thus, they suggested, a better approach would be to divest newspaper groups with a circulation above a certain level. (NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 6th meeting', 19 January 1981). The study group rejected Meacher's call on the basis that the public would not accept its statist implications. (NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 21st meeting', 20 September 1982).

daily was remitted to the NEC for further discussion.[554] Following this, the study group originally had high on its list of priorities facilitating a broad discussion in the party on a Labour movement press. In fact, the group's original consultative paper envisaged that the discussion on intervention in the press to aid diversity would only be posed within the terms of creating Labour titles.[555] Yet, the consultative paper was withdrawn. There were no hard and fast rules on this, but a division of labour seemed to prevail. The study group discussed measures to aid diversity, with a New Left emphasis on enhancing democracy, and the TUC assessed the feasibility and organised preparations for a Labour movement press.

As it was, despite the efforts of supporters, most notably Transport and General Workers' Union general secretary Moss Evans, the plan foundered. The unions were not prepared to provide the cash needed.[556] Despite discussions with the party's treasurer Norman Atkinson and formal support from the 1982 party conference, the party contributed little to the discussion or to funding the new title. Instead, at that conference, Allaun, on behalf of the NEC, was cautious, saying that a title's launch depended on cash being found.[557]

This division between the party and the union leadership also came into play with the takeover of the *Times* and *Sunday Times* by News International, headed by Rupert Murdoch. Discussion on the saga reflected the debate in the party on the alleged

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[554] Labour Party, *Conference 1979*: 385-9, RD409: 'Media Study Group Programme of Work', May 1980.
[555] RD498, Media Study Group, 'Draft Consultative Paper', July 1980.
[556] In 1980, the TUC published a pamphlet that was lukewarm in its support for a Labour movement newspaper. It recognised the advantages of such a title. However, it saw the start-up costs before it got sufficient advertising support as running into millions of pounds. (TUC, *Behind the headlines*). Nevertheless, the TUC general council called for a feasibility study at the end of that year. However, the unions raised considerably less than was needed in the appeal for the feasibility study itself, questioning union commitment to providing the cash required for the title. Despite this, the feasibility study went ahead. (Anon., 'TUC goes ahead with 'national daily' study', *Free Press* No. 10, November/December 1981, McCarthy, W. E. J., and Congress Trades Union. 1983. *The feasibility of establishing a new labour movement newspaper : a report by Lord McCarthy*. London: Trades Union Congress.). By 1983, the union leaders were making clear that they could not afford to fund such a newspaper. (Trades Union Congress. Annual, Conference. 1983. *Report of the 115th annual Trades Union Congress*. London: T.U.C.: 575-7). And after a survey of unions, a special TUC committee set up to report on progress later recommended that the newspaper should not go ahead because sufficient cash was not available. (Trades Union Congress. Annual, Conference. 1984. *Report of the 116th annual Trades Union Congress*. London: T.U.C.: 346).
[557] Labour Party, Conference (Ed.). 1982. *Report of the annual conference of the Labour Party*. London: Labour Party.: 240, 243.

inadequacy of the existing legislation to promote diversification. It also indicated that the unions were divided when faced with an opportunity to democratise the press by means of turning the newspapers over to a trust, with union involvement.[558]

In contrast, at this stage it was the Labour Party, including its leadership, which was pressing for diversity. This reflected the unstated division. It differed from the attitude to Murdoch that later leaderships adopted. Michael Foot persevered in demanding that News International's bid be referred to the Monopolies Commission in the name of diversity.[559] This decision was backed by the unions' more radical elements in the Campaign for Press Freedom (CPF), which we will discuss in a moment.[560]

However, the parliamentary party divided itself on the takeover in the ensuing Commons debate.[561] This again reflected the tension between those who wanted more press diversity and those, some closer to the unions, who were more solely interested in promoting a Labour movement press. The left-wing party treasurer Norman Atkinson

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[558] As the *Sunday Times*' editor Harold Evans' insider account chronicles, former Labour leader Callaghan and Bill Keys of SOGAT had agreed that "...they should do everything they could to ensure that *The Times* and *Sunday Times* did not fall into the personal control of a millionaire or anyone who would wish to use them as a source of propaganda or power". However, some of the print unions refused to buy shares in the new trust, despite the historic measure of influence this would give in the new title, according to Evans. Some were prepared to invest funds in the prospective trust. But others were more reluctant. Evans remembers NGA general secretary Joe Wade, "...to Callaghan's displeasure, was discouraging: 'How can I put my members' money into something that is going to yield a lower return than the Trustee Savings Bank?'" (Evans, Harold. 1983. *Good times, bad times*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.: 103).

[559] Labour's frontbench called for referral under the Monopolies and Mergers Act (discussed in Appendix 2 to Chapter 1) because it felt there would be less diversity if the owners of the *Sun* and the *News of the World* were now to take hold of the *Times* group. As the frontbench spokesman, the then Shadow Secretary of Trade John Smith put it, it would: "...create one of the greatest concentrations of newspaper power in the history of journalism in the United Kingdom". (HOC, 23 January 1981, col. 567. See also Evans, *Good times*: 114-141, Shawcross, William. 1993. *Rupert Murdoch : ringmaster of the information circus*. London: Pan.: 232. As is well known, the legislation had a loophole. It denied referral if the titles involved were not commercially viable and would close if an existing press firm did not buy them. The Labour leadership put its case for referral based on its assessment that the *Sunday Times*' was profitable, at least. (HOC, 27 January 1981: col. 784-5).

[560] The campaign's policy on this was written by the *Times* Father of Chapel, and CPF chair Jake Ecclestone, CPF, National Committee minutes, February 3 1981.

[561] From the right of the party, David Owen called for the commission to be brought in. (HOC, 23 January 1981: col. 568).

backed the union case for non-referral. He explicitly contrasted the case for a Labour press with demands for "...commercial diversity..." which he dismissed.[562]

What both these MPs and union leadership wanted was to advance the Labour movement. If it was considered that attempts at securing press diversity got in the way of this, then they should be brushed aside. As we shall see in later chapters, it would be this view – that what was central was advancing Labour rather than diversity – that would win out in the party. Nevertheless, in this period, the party still committed itself to diversity.

Diversity, The Multinationals and Internationalisation: The Open Press Authority

To achieve this diversity, instead of the statist proposals associated with the IPA, the study group agreed in 1983 with the academic Curran on a more direct method – press ownership divestment. He envisaged that this would operate through an Open Press Authority (OPA).[563]

The most detailed history of the evolution of Labour Party press policy in this period, written by the study group's chair Allaun, wrongly conflates the OPA and IPA.[564] However, the difference is clear.[565] Curran's scheme promised less state control than those of Meacher and Mullin. It would enhance diversity and increase democratic ownership. It would divest existing titles but, rather than providing franchises, like the

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[562] He argued that the unions were "...not concerned with commercial diversity which means nothing at all to us". Yet, he asserted that: "The fact that there is an anti-Socialist monopoly in the national newspapers concerns Labour members very much...". But this would not be affected by referring the matter, he reasoned. (HOC, 27 January 1981: col. 816). Atkinson was Labour Party treasurer from 1976-1981. (1983. *Dod's parliamentary companion.*: 346) He was a member of CLPD (Roth, Andrew, Janice Kerbey, Judy Tench, and Commons Great Britain Parliament House of. 1984. *Parliamentary profiles*. London: Parliamentary Profile Services.: 35) and was a member of Benn's 'kitchen cabinet'. (Benn, *The end of an era* and Panitch and Leys: 190). The NATSOPA-sponsored MP Ron Leighton backed up this view. Along with the printing union leadership, he combined supporting radical proposals in the long term with short-term expediency. He backed the minority report proposals for diversifying the press. Leighton denounced capitalism for producing oligopolisation. Yet, he reiterated the print unions' view that Murdoch's ownership provided the only viable alternative. (*Ibid.*: col. 810-3).

[563] RD 2611: James Curran, 'Socialist Plan for the Press', January 1983. He had put forward a similar proposal in Curran, *The British Press*.

[564] Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 87-8.

[565] Curran later implied that the proposals were counterposed. (James Curran 'The road to a reformed press' *Free Press* No. 10, November/December 1981).

IPA, it would deliver funding for the titles to be reconstituted as co-operatives. However, importantly, the committee did not share this democratic imperative. We shall return to this. It is true that the title of Curran's system echoed the Open Broadcasting Authority, detailed in a 1978 White Paper, produced while Labour was in government.[566] Yet, the policies it employed provided another example of policy transfer. The OPA was in the Scandinavian social market tradition, which had been the important fount for earlier policy transfers.

As well as defying the trend to oligopoly, the policies to enable divestment were meant to challenge multinational capital's hold over newspapers. Demands for diversity had been given added impetus by the AES thinkers' radical analysis of the role played by multinational capital. A contrast to Eric Shaw's assessment of this comes from Leo Panitch and Colin Leys explicitly and John Callaghan implicitly.[567] They identify that the Labour left had seriously considered policies to face the challenge of the world's economic internationalisation. Left thinker Stuart Holland's analysis had informed *Labour's Programme 1973*. As we saw, he considered that multinational capital's dominance in the British economy meant it was escaping the influence of national Keynesian controls. This was a reason why the AES advocated increasing state intervention.[568] As we shall see, New Labour used economic internationalisation to justify jettisoning policies barring cross-ownership, increasing the multinationals' hold. Yet, much earlier, Labour thinkers had seen this as a reason to increase multinational *divestment*.

Labour's 1979 conference motion had reiterated the concern mentioned as early as 1974 in *The people and the media* that multinationals were diversifying into newspaper ownership and saw this as another barrier to democracy functioning.[569] That same year, Holland, jointly addressing a conference organised by the IWC with James Curran, indicated that the previous decade had seen multinational capital buy up a large section of

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[566] James Curran 'The road to a reformed press' *Free Press* No. 10, November/December 1981.
[567] Shaw, *1979*: 14, Panitch and Leys: 170, 311.
[568] Callaghan, *Retreat*: 58.
[569] Labour Party, *Conference 1979*: 384, Labour Party, *The people and the media*: 21.

the British press. The two alleged that this was directly affecting news and opinion in the press and the bias against organised labour.[570]

The study group took up a similar theme when it formulated policy to aid diversity. An introductory paper produced for the subcommittee explicitly called on it to consider corporate press ownership.[571] And Curran considered increased diagonal concentration justified his new scheme for press plurality, adopted by the subcommittee.[572] Study group members reiterated concerns expressed in Labour Party documents, going back as far as 1922, about diversified ownership by corporations. They were concerned that this had led to a situation where ownership of wider business interests could threaten editorial inquiry into those broader areas.[573] Speakers, including NEC spokespeople, expressed similar fears at the 1982 party conference. Delegates considered that these firms were using their newspapers to protect their wider interests. They explicitly considered that this countered the newspapers' role of providing information to aid democracy.[574]

Curran's policy on divestment concentrated on what we identified earlier as a gap in Labour's proposals. This was on competition legislation, which had been associated with liberal responses to the problems of diversity. In another example of policy transfer, Curran looked to West German legislation to promote demerger.[575] He wanted to bar newspaper or magazine publishers from securing TV and radio franchises.[576]

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[570] Curran, James and Stuart Holland, 'Public Intervention in the Press', reprinted in *Workers' Control Bulletin*, No. 3, 1979, 3-4. Benn himself reflected this awareness of the increased role of multinationals in British media ownership. (Benn, *Arguments for democracy*: 116-17).

[571] TUC, *Behind the headlines*: 5, 6, 8.

[572] The period since the late 1950s had largely seen the British press become a part of a web of seven diversified multinationals, with interests ranging from banking and mining to airlines and North Sea oil, according to figures produced by the academic. (RD 2611: James Curran, 'Socialist Plan for the Press', January 1983: 3).

[573] Labour Research, Department. 1922. *The Press*: London.: 47, Labour Party, *The people and the media*: 21, RD 816, Tom Baistow, 'Media Study Group Right of Reply Draft', April 1981, RD 1027, Home Policy Committee Press and Publicity Committee 'The Right of Reply Draft NEC statement', August 1981, RD 1112, 'Home Policy Committee Draft NEC statement', October 1981, National Executive Committee 'Statement by the National Executive Committee: The Right of Reply', Labour Party, March 1982.

[574] Labour Party, *Conference 1982*: 240-2.

[575] He set a figure of 9 million as the maximum circulation figure any publishing group could control. He foresaw that, in Britain, similar laws would lead to the sell-off of such titles as the *Times*, *Sunday Times* and *Sunday Mirror*, as well as local monopoly titles. Curran combined this with anti-monopoly measures to stop cross-ownership.

[576] RD 2611: James Curran, 'Socialist Plan for the Press', January 1983: 1-3.

However, as has been mentioned, Curran went beyond the classical liberal legislative response. He combined anti-oligopolistic limits on ownership levels with active policies for funding the divested and unprofitable titles under new ownership structures. He again justified this on the grounds that press ownership concentration was greater in Britain.[577] Thus, to solely replicate existing legislation from other states, on its own, would be to provide too little too late.

Curran recognised that setting such limits on their own would be only likely to lead to other multinationals buying the mostly unprofitable titles that would be offloaded. In order to support these titles' independence, he envisaged that the OPA would provide cash loans when newspapers from existing groups were sold. The public purse already funded unprofitable titles as their existing owners set the losses against tax, he argued. These funds would instead aid diversity.[578]

The OPA model shared important characteristics with the earlier plans. In another example of policy transfer, there would be a launch fund modelled on that employed in Sweden. This would confront the problem of the high newspaper market entry costs. Unlike some previous manifestations, aid would take the form of an interest-free loan and it would only form part of the start-up funds needed.

Yet, the use of state funds and loans meant that the OPA differed from the earlier advertising revenue board proposal. Curran explicitly pulled back from the board plan. It was an example of a policy transfer that did not have sufficient political backing – another example of a retreat in the face of a shifting political climate less confident about large-scale intervention in the market.[579] At the time, rather than prescribe on this, Curran felt that the OPA could itself examine methods for advertising redistribution.[580]

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[577] *Ibid.*: 1-2.

[578] This would provide an alternative in a situation such as that when the *Times* newspapers were put up for sale.

[579] Although at the time, he identified technical flaws with the operation of the scheme, more recently he has seen the problem was that it lacked political support. The problems he identified at the time were with the lack of profitability in the British press. He also saw problems with a tax levy, which, while fairer if

It agreed to support Curran's plan for an OPA, with some key provisos. We shall discuss the committee's reluctance to support Curran's measures for democratic ownership later in this chapter. However, on other issues, the group showed itself to be more radical than Curran, even if, again, their arguments were not entirely sketched out. Members of the committee were concerned that Curran had set his 9 million ceiling figure for divestment too high and agreed a much lower figure.[581] In addition, they agreed that the OPA should compensate selected titles that suffered from bifurcation, rather than concern itself with advertising revenue – a retreat from the 1982 conference position.[582] Yet, despite this commitment to compensation, members *also* felt that OPA money should be used to fund new titles, rather than propping up existing failing ones.[583] Thus, overall, on this key point, the study group looked two ways. As for the divisive issue of how it would be funded, the following meeting agreed that it would be jointly funded by the state and an advertising tax.

The group agreed that its manifesto proposals would be based on the amended OPA. The NEC affirmed this.[584] However, the subcommittee had not agreed on the key issue of funding of existing titles.

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paid on net incomes, could be subject to evasion. Also, he indicated that if only newspapers were taxed, the scheme faced the danger that advertising would migrate to other media. Curran also raised objections to the advertising revenue board. (Curran, Different approaches: 113). His view now is that: "There was a lack of support for it. I still think it was an idea that had mileage. So, I went back to a rather more modest proposal...[I]t would have been an evolving model. What is interesting about the Scandinavian model is that they start off with very simple principles and actually have all sorts of variations to the automatic functioning principal...The advertising revenue board would have evolved in the same way as a Press Subsidies Board does in Sweden...There clearly were technical problems with the way it operated that could have been resolved, in the way that there had been technical problems with the Press Subsidies Board...But it was defensible and is defensible. But its very complexity and its ambition were its undoing." (Curran interview).

[580] He advocated the policy transfer method, flagging up as alternatives the Swedish and French systems. The latter, we can add, has been less successful.

[581] Tom Baistow identified that News International and the then large owner Reed were the only companies that would be divested under Curran's figures. Jake Ecclestone of the NUJ shared this view. He rejected Curran's assessment that aiming for such minimal divestment would appeal to moderate opinion. His position was that there would be opposition to any figure. (NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 22nd meeting', 18 January 1983).

[582] NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 23rd meeting', 1 February 1983.

[583] Ecclestone was vocal on this. (Study Group, 22nd meeting).

[584] Study Group, 23nd meeting.

However, as Labour policy generally shifted away from confronting business after the right regained control, so did Labour's press strategy and instead became mired in confusion. By 1982, the study group was reflecting overall policy retrenchment. In formulating the media section of the *Labour's Programme 1982*, the group retreated from three interventionist methods for achieving diversity previously agreed by the party. The first indicated a shift from more statist methods – the National Printing Corporation was dropped. The second was, as indicated, to withdraw support from a revenue board and instead restrict the amount of advertising that individual publications could have. The third was to abandon a commitment to diversifying government advertising, prominently discussed before 1979, but little debated after that.[585]

Yet, more importantly, within weeks of it being rejected by the study group, plans for an IPA, similar to Meacher's, became Labour Party policy at the 1982 conference.[586] The call was part of a composited motion, which constituencies proposed and seconded. The NEC supported it, with the study group chair Frank Allaun, acting as its representative. Meacher, himself, also backed the motion. Yet, the discussion on the motion, which also supported the rejected national printing corporation, did not explicitly refer to the IPA. So the NEC, despite having had passed no motion supporting it, had accepted the new arrangement, after the study group had explicitly rejected it. This indicated confusion over policy creation. The rules agreed for this, outlined above, had been flouted. This was

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[585] The committee did not extensively discuss the idea of a National Printing Corporation, although this was party policy. When it came to policy commitments for the manifesto, the group first amended this commitment to one that there be 'common printing facilities', thus implicitly directly identifying these as a state-owned nationalised facility. By the time of the final draft from the study group, the commitment to any printing concern was dropped. The group amended a commitment to redistribute advertising revenue to one for the "...regulation..." of revenue to reduce the dependence on advertising and to aid publications which were discriminated against by advertisers. (RD2165: Media Study Group, 'Labour's Programme 1982 – Media Section', March 1982, RD2239: Media Study Group, 'Labour's Programme 1982 – Media Section (2nd Draft)', March 1982, RD2288: Special Home Policy Committee, 'Labour's Programme 1982 – Media Section (as agreed by the Media Study Group)', April 1982, NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 17th meeting', 15 March 1982, NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 18th meeting', 31 March 1982).

[586] The conference explicitly demanded "...the owners of the British daily press to adhere to a strict code of impartiality ...". (Labour Party, *Conference 1982*: 239-40).

particularly significant because the conference decisions formed *Labour's Programme 1992*, on which the manifesto was set to be based.

Meanwhile, the subcommittee only developed its own policy by February 1983, after the series of false turns identified. This was very late in the day for inclusion in the manifesto. The proposals had not followed the intricate procedure, sketched above. It was formulated long after the party had produced its *Programme*.

It was in this confused situation that neither the OPA nor IPA made it into the manifesto. This left a major gap in the manifesto proposals and another retreat from the ideas developed in the group and the conference. We shall return to this at the end of this chapter. Nevertheless, by 1993, the party was still committed to diversity. The same was not true for press democratic control.

DEMOCRATIC CONTROL

The party saw an upsurge in interest in democratic control of the press early in the 1979-1983 period. This partly reflected industrial militancy. However, despite internal and some external pressure from media activists, as the left's strength dissipated, so did these demands.

Two related dilemmas became apparent. A difficulty that we have alluded to before still existed. That was of reconciling both producer democracy – that is democratic control by those involved in the industry, both journalists and others – and the wider participation and democratic involvement of those who read the newspapers and the whole of civil society. There was also the relationship between state involvement and democratic participation, which will be explored with regard to the right of reply, to be considered in the appendix to this chapter.

By 1979, forces inside and outside the Labour Party were pushing for democratic control of the press.[587] It was in this atmosphere that the IWC, which was linked with the left both inside and outside the party, held a conference on the media and democracy in 1979.[588] This spawned the media trade union and activist movement, the Campaign for Press Freedom (CPF).[589] This would later include Broadcasting in its title (CPBF). We shall consider its relationship with the Labour Party at this time in the appendix to this chapter. Some Labour Party figures at the conference again reduced democratic control to that of the workers. James Curran and Stuart Holland envisaged a Press Co-operative Development Agency to provide launch capital for new publications under workers'

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[587] Those outside the party expressed a radical position, which was one of those outlined in our introduction. Some revolutionary socialists put the view that worker's ownership of a plural press should be part of the process of worker's ownership across the whole economy and society. (Dave Bailey, 'Workers' Control of the Media' in Gardner, Carl. 1979. *Media, politics and culture : a socialist view*. London: Macmillan.: 137-147).

[588] The IWC, as mentioned, promoted democratic self-management of industry. Members were involved in the battle for constitutional changes in the Labour Party.

[589] Curran interview.

control.[590] The Labour Party adopted this more syndicalist position. The 1979 party conference supported Producer Press Co-operatives as part of:

> ...the development of industrial democracy in the newspaper industry in such a way as to give all employees a voice in major policy decisions, while, at the same time guaranteeing autonomy and freedom from interference in...[the] day-to-day work of editorial and production workers. [591]

Perhaps ironically, it was left to the union movement to go beyond this. The 1980 pamphlet *Behind the Headlines*, produced by the TUC general council, called on the press industry to work with the media unions in developing industrial democracy. But it also considered consumer representation.[592] Other Labour Party figures shared this broader concern. Two *Labour Weekly* journalists Harold Frayman and Donald Ross, the latter having represented the NEC at the Royal commission, envisaged that any government funding for the press would be dependent on the newspapers being trusts. But they told the IWC conference that they also felt that trusts should have broader representation than just the producers. The journalists envisaged that readers, as consumers, should be represented.[593] Frayman carried this viewpoint into discussions on the Media Study Group.

The 1980 Media Study Group programme had also pressed for industrial democracy across the media, including in the newspaper industry.[594] However, reflecting the general

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[590] Newspaper distribution would also be handled by a co-operative. (Curran, James and Stuart Holland, 'Public Intervention in the Press', reprinted in *Workers' Control Bulletin*, No. 3, 1979: 3-4). Tony Benn shared a similar viewpoint. He called for co-operatives and producer groups to be included in those being aided by a printing corporation. (Benn, Tony. 1979. *The need for a free press*. Nottingham: Institute for Workers' Control).

[591] Labour Party, *Conference 1979*: 384.

[592] TUC, *Behind the headlines*: 23, 28.

[593] Harold Frayman and Donald Ross 'A Labour Daily?', reprinted in *Workers' Control Bulletin*, No. 3, 1979, 6-8.

[594] An indication of the thinking of the committee came with the 1980 draft consultative paper, that the subcommittee was meant to produce under the party's new rules outlined above. The paper was withdrawn after members of the Home Policy committee felt that it was too closed in its conclusions. However, it is worth considering in order to indicate the thinking of the committee at this time. The study group considered newspaper democracy within the narrower framework of industrial democracy. Nevertheless, it emphasised that this democracy lay "...at the heart of any acceptable scheme for the reform of the press".

party policy retrenchment that followed the radical upsurge, the discussion that followed was much more radical in its analysis than in its prescriptions. Frayman developed the more radical analysis, but he refused to provide a policy for the party. The more practical, but less radical, prescriptions came from Curran.

Writing at the end of 1980, Frayman usefully defined democracy in the press in three ways. He described it as the relationship between "...a democratic society and its newspapers..."; industrial democracy in the press; and "...the relationship between the contents of newspapers, editorial decision-making, and interest groups...". Within this, he saw the interest group of workers as "...the most obvious...".[595] Frayman concentrated on the latter to go beyond what he saw as the party's undeveloped broad-brush support for press industrial democracy in *The people and the media* document.

Rather than accepting that press business opposition provided a barrier to implementing democratic input in both industrial and editorial decision-making, he made a call to arms. In another example of policy transfer, Frayman was prepared to learn from the Yugoslavian experience, which for a time had provided hope of an alternative in the Eastern bloc. This clearly broke from social democratic models and was closer to the Marxist positions we considered.[596] The New Left, which William's model sprung up from, was particularly inspired by the Yugoslavian workers' control experiments.[597]

This system combined elements of both representative and direct democracy in its operation, which Frayman also fused in the self-management system he supported. What attracted him to apply this to a British system was that it gave non-journalist press

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The committee contrasted the experience of France, where the French co-operative *Le Monde* indicated that newspaper control did "...not have to be conventionally capitalist to ensure genuine press freedom...", with British disinterest in press co-operatives. This was despite the fact that the *Guardian* and the *Observer* were trust-controlled. (RD498 July 1980 'Draft Consultative Paper': 5. See also RD 557, 'Note on Consultative Paper', October 1980).

[595] RD 591, Harold Frayman, 'Democracy and the Press', November 1980: 1. In hindsight, we might identify the problem of the relationship between interests group and the wider citizenry.

[596] *Ibid.*: 4-5.

[597] See, for instance, Michael Barratt Brown, 'Jugoslavia Revisited' in New Left Review No. 1 (1960), 'Workers' Control In A Planned Economy' in New Left Review No. 2 (1960), Royden Harrison, 'The Congress of Workers' Councils, Yugoslavia' in New Reasoner No. 2 (1957), Ralph Miliband, 'The Yugoslav Programme' in New Reasoner No. 9 (1959).

workers a real but distant involvement in editorial decisions.[598] They could protest at editorial decisions, but not make them, and could be involved in sacking a recalcitrant editor, without controlling the editor's actions day-to-day. Thus, this policy transfer provided a model to achieve the policy advocated by the 1979 party conference.

Yet, Frayman also advocated broader democratic representation, going beyond industrial democracy, towards community control. This was needed as internal democracy would not necessarily be able to represent those he saw as badly treated by the press, including, interestingly, the Liberal Party and ethnic minorities. Representation on newspaper editorial boards would need to be extended to the wider community, not just newspaper readers. Nevertheless, although this represented a development from previous discussions, Frayman's prescriptions were vague.[599] This point on community control does not seem to have been picked up by other members of the committee, more than in the limited sense of the right of reply, which we will discuss.[600]

Overall, nevertheless, Frayman provided a very radical analysis. However, it had a sizeable problem. This immobilised the discussion on democratic reform. It also reflected the increasing resistance to intervention in the party's leading circles. Despite the detail in Frayman's analysis, he argued that the party should encourage industrial democracy but not lay down any extensive prescriptions.[601]

A more practical call than Frayman's came from Curran in his proposals for an OPA. Like all those considering democratic ownership and control, he was now involved in the CPF.[602] Curran advocated increased corporatist representation, without state control. He planned for the OPA to have a governing board consisting of the major parties, press management and unions. And, as we have seen, to promote democratic control within the

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[598] Frayman: 4-5.
[599] They seemed to relate to a right of reply. Thus, he argued, the powers of the wider community would be likely to be "...little more than a chance to right wrongs: but it would be a start." (*Ibid.*: 1).
[600] This was despite the fact that a more concrete example of a form of community control was developed in same period. The *East End News*'s advocates indicated that it was structured as a joint reader/producer co-operative, with readers in the majority on the management committee. (Simon Partridge, 'Towards a Left Alternative Press', *Free Press* 10, November/December 1981).
[601] NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 4th meeting', 20 November 1980.
[602] One example was RD 548 Tom Baistow The 'New' Technology and a More Democratic Press'.

newspaper industry, he envisaged reorganising disinvested newspapers either as journalist or print worker co-operatives.[603]

However, the main indicator that demands for democratic control were dissipating within the party, as the right regained control, was that these democratic demands were not among the OPA measures that the study group recommended for the manifesto. Instead, all the study group could agree by January 1983 was that the launch fund should require reconstituted publications to operate as public trusts or co-operatives only "...where appropriate".[604] And even this was left out of the proposals when the group finally drafted what it wanted to go into the document that would shape the manifesto in February of that year.[605]

Two study group media stalwarts, Philip Whitehead and Austin Mitchell, reflected this turning tide in the group. Whitehead had been involved in the Free Communications Group and had acted as a bridgehead between it and the Labour Party a decade before.[606] Now he was reluctant to challenge existing media ownership, because of the pressure it could bring to bear. Although more concerned with the broadcast media, along with Mitchell, he explicitly counselled that radical proposals would face the wrath of media owners and castigated calls for increased media accountability. The duo believed that if the party did not go "...with the grain..." this would unleash "...a powerful campaign of distortion and to allow public hostility to be whipped up against the proposals...". [607] Striking such a conservative note would be music to the ears of the press businesses and the party right who considered that the status quo on press ownership, while regrettable, could not be challenged.

Thus, the situation on the study group was this: although a majority supported increasing democratic control in the press, the most developed position on this question came from

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[603] James Curran, 'A Socialist Plan for the Press' RD: 2611/January 1983.
[604] Study Group, 22nd meeting.
[605] Study Group, 23nd meeting.
[606] Neal Ascherson, Correspondence with the author, 24th April 2001, Curran interview.
[607] RD 2115: Philip Whitehead and Austin Mitchell, 'Some Suggestions for Media Policy'. Allaun appears to have been referring to Whitehead and Mitchell when he later wrote that there was a minority who particularly opposed "...some of the more radical ideas". (Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 89).

someone opposed to Labour imposing such a scheme. A minority on the study group also rejected any such moves. The result was stalemate. As with discussions on plans to encourage diversity, the extensive and elaborate nature of the decision-making process – an ironic problem considering what was being discussed was the extension of democratic involvement – added to this situation where few definite decisions were taken. As Allaun notes, all the group's proposals were still being discussed by the time of the 1983 election and were neither agreed by the committee or the party's NEC. [608]

Without agreement within the media study group on this question, the media historian Des Freedman views that a further sign of this retreat came from Benn himself.[609] By 1981, the leading public advocate of the New Left politics in the Labour Party and the keen media reformer had pulled back from advocating democratic control. In a book on the question of democracy, Benn's proposed reforms did not refer to press workers being involved in decision-making, unlike previously. This reversal of his previous positions was even more abrupt when it is considered that it was at odds with the book's analysis.[610] The turnaround may have been an acknowledgement, as we have indicated, of the problems of democratic control in the media. He could also have recognised support for industrial democracy wave was ebbing.

In the party, the retreat was such that the 1982 conference, which discussed the media, the 1982 Programme, and the 1983 manifesto made no mention of press democratic control.

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[608] Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 88-9.
[609] Freedman, 2000: 180.
[610] Thus, Benn's assessment in the work was that journalists were forced to be complicit with the line taken by the media proprietors and management. Also, in identifying 'The way ahead' for democracy to be expanded in the publication, he advocated workers' participation across industry. (Benn, *Arguments for democracy*: 105, 150, 165-6).

Explaining the retreat

How should we explain this reluctance to support any form of democratic ownership and participation in the press? It reflected the left's retreat.[611] However, there is also another explanation. In considering the relative pressures on the party's press industrial democracy policy-making, Frayman gave important pointers. He looked at the contending determination to press forward and resist industrial democracy by the unions and the newspaper businesses. As we have seen, the press made clear to Labour that it faced a backlash if it pursued this. Frayman saw that newspaper reaction to the restoration of the closed shop had chastened some in the party.[612]

In addition, newspaper printers had exercised a limited and narrow industrial militancy. On the one hand, Frayman notes that print workers had "...secured as much and more control of the work process as workers anywhere in Britain". They controlled work rates and those employed, effectively.[613] Curran makes a similar point. He says a trip to the *Daily Mirror* in this period was instructive as to the level of shop floor control the printers had.[614]

Yet, this only ineffectively and erratically translated itself into demands in the Labour Party for press industrial control. Both Frayman and Curran have given complementary reasons for this. Curran notes that this effective workers' control: "...was not articulated and justified by the theory... And this gives you an idea for why some of the forms were somewhat corrupt. It had not been purified or debated."[615] Also, Frayman and Curran considered that the media unions were sometimes more reluctant to embrace industrial democracy, when faced with the reality of it, rather than when they could put it forward

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[611] This represented both demoralisation and realism as to what was possible to achieve in the more chastened circumstances facing the party's policy overall.
[612] "[W]e should not pretend that their cries of pain fell on deaf ears", as Frayman put it. (Frayman: 2).
[613] *Ibid.*: 3.
[614] "It was like a foreign country. In order to move from one room to the next we had to pass through border controls. The border control was the particular rep for that part of the printing process. And I was with the general secretary of the trade union who had to negotiate his way around. Here was an industry that was effectively run by the workers..." (Curran interview).
[615] Curran interview.

as a formal paper aspiration. So, for instance, Frayman shared the view that we outlined in a previous chapter that the press closed shop battle represented a missed opportunity for the NUJ.[616] Nevertheless, at the same time, the union hierarchy exhibited a maximalist approach in party debates; demanding all or nothing. Those on the study group were concerned about workers becoming involved in making decisions when they did not have full control. The effect of this was that the union leadership passed resolutions on paper but did little in practice.[617]

Equally, Frayman indicated another reason why leaderships were reluctant to involve their unions in industrial democracy campaigns. They could cut across the more basic union demands for pay and conditions. Co-operatives could not guarantee the relatively high pay rates negotiated by the media unions with the corporate owners.[618] Rather than democratic ownership, a way to achieve control was seen to come through the right of reply. However, as the appendix to this chapter indicates, the right of reply shifted from one dependent less on worker control and more on legal constraint.

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[616] In the outcry of propreitors and editors, the main charge had been that, with such an agreement, media workers would interfere with editors' rights. Frayman saw that only a small NUJ minority publicly hinted that they rejected the union leadership's response – the union would only 'interfere' during industrial disputes. Fewer still wanted others in the industry, such as printers, to have their say. He rejected this approach. "[I]t is precisely this kind of 'interference' in the existing editorial power structure which must lie at the heart of any proposal to make the press as a whole more democratic." (Frayman: 3).

[617] NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 4th meeting', 20 November 1980. As Curran puts it: "There were two absolutes. There was a workers' control which was what was going to be established when the Jerusalem was built. And you had the existing system. And anything between fell short of Jerusalem. There was a strange combination of confrontation and conservatism...". (Curran interview).

[618] Frayman: 3.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PARTY'S PRESS POLICY COMMITMENTS?

The Labour Party policy shift following the right counter-offensive did not concentrate on press policies, still regarded as less important. Yet, there was a discernable change in the policies compared with what had been agreed by the study group.

One pressure weighing on the right was that the existing newspapers had been allies in its revival, as indicated.[619] This linked with shifts that were to occur in the approach taken to political marketing in Labour campaigning, which will be a subject of the next chapter. As Dominic Wring explains, in the period this thesis has so far considered, campaign innovation stagnated, following Labour's previous engagement in this area, starting with universal suffrage's introduction. Hostility had developed to such techniques after Labour's 1970 election failure. Subsequent campaigns had been marked by poor management and organisation, and an unfocussed strategy.[620] However, this was about to change. The right was now again using the press to its advantage and was thus reluctant to challenge it.

Hattersley, who helped set up the right-wing pressure group Solidarity, was more concerned about the press than most. As this chapter's appendix indicates, he was a CPF sponsor and advocated the right of reply.[621] He, in fact, used a regular *Punch* magazine column to flag up concerns with journalistic quality and the influence of propreitors on editorial content.[622] Yet, even he regarded press concentration as something that could not be challenged without there being 'undue' government interference. He felt that intervention going beyond some tightening of anti-monopoly controls, consistent with a

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[619] The right used its press contacts to discredit the left by linking it with extremism; "...hence the imagery of 'bully boys', the analogies with Eastern Europe and the accusations of intimidation and brutality". (Shaw, *Discipline*: 246, cited in Panitch and Leys: 167. See also 145).

[620] Wring, Dominic, and Studies Judge Institute of Management. 1995. *Political marketing and organisational development : the case of the Labour Party in Britain.* Cambridge: Judge Institute of Management Studies in conjunction with the Engineering Department, University of Cambridge.: 1-12. Seymour-Ure rather personalises this point for Labour in office. While, as we have seen, Wilson was concerned with public communication, Callaghan "...did not think the effort necessary...perhaps...". (Seymour-Ure, *Prime ministers*: 126).

[621] Alan Richardson and Mike Power, 'Media Freedom and the CPBF' in Curran, *Bending*: 209-10, HOC, Vol. 37, 18 February 1983, col. 586-7, O'Malley and Soley: 81, Curran interview.

[622] Hattersley, Roy. 1983. *Press gang.* London: Robson Books.: 61-3.

liberal pluralist response, could lead to government censorship.[623] Also, like Mitchell and Whitehead on the study group, he felt that only a limited amount could be done in the face of press power. Hattersley claimed that party supporters regarded "...the antics of the *Daily Mail* and the *Sun* as one of the hazards of their existence, for which they must make plans in the way that they prepare for snow and the late arrival of railway trains".[624]

Yet, this reluctance does not seem to have reflected the feeling of the party conference. The 1982 conference had gone even further than previous gatherings in its hostility to the press and media, claiming that the "...most powerful opponents..." of the Labour Party in its quest for socialism and equality were the forces of mass communication. It denounced the media for its role in fostering "...acceptance of a capitalist social order...". It even took a simplistic similar view to early media theorists, who saw the media had overwhelming power to influence all individuals in mass society in a fairly uniform way.[625] The readers were subject to "...mass indoctrination...". As already indicated, the conference even called for an Independent Press Authority, as had Mullin and Meacher. This reflected a more general mood. One delegate pointed out to the conference that almost every debate over the week had castigated press bias.[626]

Nevertheless, with the right back in control of the decision-making forum of the NEC, as well as controlling the Shadow Cabinet, Labour's election manifesto toned down the position of the study group, which itself had been rather limited in its decisions. In doing this, Foot as leader, despite his previous commitment to press ownership reform, with the right-winger Dennis Healey as his deputy, consented to the moves.

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[623] Curran, Different approaches: 94.
[624] Hattersley, *Press gang*: 9. Interesting, the *Mail* staff were said not to always share this resigned attitude. Greenslade recounts how the NUJ chapel agreed to call on the editor David English to "...give the other parties [apart from the Conservatives] a fair crack of the whip...". English refused. (Greenslade, *Press Gang*: 452).
[625] Franklin, *Packaging politics*: 205-6, Miller, *Media and voters*: 1.
[626] Labour Party, *Conference 1982*: 239-40, 241.

The 'longest suicide note in history' was rather short on press policy.[627] Freedman notes that the four pages in *Labour's Programme 1982* had been reduced to a few sentences with limited prescriptions.[628] Curran describes some of the 'radical-sounding' plans as imprecise.[629]

The key omission from what the study group decided was that the commitment to the OPA had disappeared. With this departure went any mechanism for supporting discarded titles when anti-monopoly legislation forced oligopolies to divest of their holdings.[630] Curran perceptively considers that the effect of breaking up press concentration, on its own, "...would probably have been to close papers...", because the manifesto made no further provision to support divested titles.[631] The OPA was in the Scandinavian social market tradition. The refusal to include a commitment to intervention was an example of a limited policy transfer – constrained by political viability.

Indeed, it was not clear what bodies would implement any of the plans, since demands for an integrated communications ministry had also been discarded. The plea for this was one response to the failure of previous press policy to get onto the statute book under Callaghan.[632] The study group in February 1983 agreed to back this proposal for an integrated ministry to be put into the campaign document, which was set to form the basis of the manifesto. Yet, this was ignored, prompting fears that any commitments would be buried in the gaps between government departments.

Also, as we have indicated already, the manifesto provided no commitment to democratic ownership of the press, a National Printing Corporation, an advertising revenue board or

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[627] As Allaun put it, the manifesto was strong on generalities but contained few specifics. (Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 90).
[628] Freedman, 2000: 184-5. See also Freedman, 2003: 126.
[629] Curran, Different approaches: 129.
[630] Dale: 181, Curran, Different approaches: 133, Baistow, *Fourth-rate estate*: 97, 98-100.
[631] Curran, Different approaches: 133.
[632] As we have seen, a key minister Michael Meacher blamed the Labour government's reluctance to implement the press proposals of the party and the Royal Commission partly on the fact that there was no minister clearly responsible for the media. Meacher campaigned for a ministry of communications in the study group and in wider party forums. (Meacher, Reform: 9, Labour Party, *Conference 1982*: 242-3).

a commitment to diversify government advertising, which had so concerned the party discussions previously.

A further reason for the retreat relates to a theme mentioned at the top of this chapter. Francis Cripps' analysis of the AES and the media, referred to earlier, provided an important lesson, which those propagating the AES on the NEC did not noticeably heed. In a notion which borrowed from conceptions of hegemony associated with Antonio Gramsci, Cripps indicated that the AES needed to "...establish its own resonance in the media...". It was only then that it would be seen as realistic.[633] While Cripps overstated the media's power, he made an important point. As indicated, when the NEC was in the ascendancy, its members had problems in promoting their policies to the wider electorate. This same difficulty faced the study group and the NEC in promoting a strategy on press ownership and control. The NEC was not just required to popularise this strategy among voters in order to be elected, as important as this was. It also needed to make them popular so that the NEC could withstand pressures to ameliorate them in the face of media corporation pressure and right-wing backlash.

The internalised and incomplete development of press ownership policy meant that few knew about it. An October 1981 party political broadcast concerning media bias provided an isolated exception to this internalisation.[634] A former leading trade union press officer and CPBF activist told the author that he had little knowledge of the NEC media committee's policy at the time.[635] If this was true of someone in the 'inner loop', then it is likely to have also been the case for Labour supporters.

Tony Benn was a prime example of this internalisation, albeit in the face of a severe press and media assault. The writers Panitch and Leys suggest that one of Benn's problems was that in his determination to get publicity for his cause, he was too prepared to talk to the

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[633] Francis Cripps, 'The British Crisis – Can the Left Win?' in *New Left Review*, No. 128, July-August 1981: 96-7.

[634] Yet, as Labour produced this broadcast in the middle of the discussion on the study group, it was tentative about the press reforms needed. (Aldridge, David. 'Labour Party broadcast attacks bias', *Free Press* No. 10, November/December 1981).

[635] Personal interview with John Monks, then NALGO communications officer, later UNISON head of communications, August 24 2001.

press and the media in ways that were used against him.[636] It is a correct commonplace to suggest that Benn experienced some of the harshest press coverage ever meted out to any senior politician. However, contrary to the assessment of Panitch and Leys, it can be asserted that once Benn had decided to travel such a path, he needed to be consistent. But he was not.

Benn complained persuasively that neither he, nor the Labour left, nor the left-dominated NEC, could get their position across in an unmediated way to the public, because of press bias.[637] Yet, the *Guardian* and then the *Times* offered him the chance to pen a regular column.[638] Here, he could have instituted a more unmediated relationship with readers. However, he spurned these opportunities, the first to spend more time on internal party campaigning.[639] Instead, his attitude was to rely on the reporting of his parliamentary speeches. Also, at key points in this period when he needed to mobilise support, he refused to be interviewed by the British mainstream media.[640] Given the way the press treated him, this may have been understandable. But it was nonetheless inconsistent and likely to be harmful to his and the Labour left's profile, when the right were enlisting press support for a counter-attack.

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[636] Panitch and Leys.
[637] He wanted the possibility for his speeches to be reported in full. (Benn, *Conflicts of interest*: 502).
[638] Benn, *Conflicts of interest*: 503 and Benn, *The end of an era*: 226.
[639] Benn, *Conflicts of interest*: 503.
[640] As he put it: "I like the simplicity of making Parliament my main forum and allowing the press to cover it or not as they think best...". (*Ibid.*: 507). He refused offers to appear on any post-1979 election post-mortem programmes. He also rejected offers of BBC interviews at a key point during the 1979 party conference. Yet, at the same time he agreed to do the Parkinson show, which just angered the BBC's current affairs department. (*Ibid.*: 494, 546, 547). He rebuffed an offer to be given five minutes on the ITN's *News at One* – a quarter of the programme's air-time – in 1980. (Anon., 'ITN offers Benn five minutes', *Free Press*, No. 3, October 1980, Gaber, Ivor. 1980. 'Benn and ITN' *Free Press*, No. 4, December 1980). Benn proudly announced that he refused all radio and television interviews at the Wembley Special Conference in 1981, apart from one for the Soviet labour magazine *Trud.* He also would not talk to journalists at a key point during his deputy leadership bid that same year. (Benn, *The end of an era*: 69, 151).

CONCLUSION

How should this period and Labour's 1983 manifesto be considered overall? We have indicated that there were retreats before 1993 from the radical positions outlined at the 1979 conference and espoused on the study group. The attempt to employ public service notions to provide balance was a failure. Yet, the strategy promoted by the group, which would have answered some of the previous problems with press ownership policy, did not make it into the 1983 election programme.

Nevertheless, despite this, it should be made crystal-clear that the manifesto was a sea-change from that four years previously. It represented the most far-reaching and radical manifesto commitment to providing press diversity and thus aiding democracy made by the Labour Party. If Labour had been elected and the commitments had been translated into government policy, then press ownership would have been transformed. As such, the CPBF hailed it, in its 'official history', as incorporating "...some of campaign's radical proposals...".[641] The 1983 manifesto committed the party to anti-monopoly legislation that went well beyond liberal pluralist notions. It dedicated the party to "... breaking up 'major concentrations of press ownership'" by setting a ceiling on the number of titles which could be owned by one individual or press group. It also pledged the Government to prohibit cross-media ownership. As importantly, as a policy transfer from Scandinavian-style social market notions, it promised that a launch fund would be set up to assist new publications. As the appendix to this chapter outlines, it also committed a Labour government to introducing a statutory right of reply.[642]

To conclude, we will consider how well the 'classic' positions on policy formation outlined in Chapter 1 can explain the events described. At the start of this period, the left mobilised for what was seen as greater party democracy, in a challenge to Michels' iron law of oligarchy.[643] Some leading figures linked calls for participative democracy with demands for both greater diversity and democratic control over the press. The 1979

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[641] Richardson and Power: 209.
[642] Dale: 181.
[643] Callaghan, *Retreat*: 192.

conference called for a discussion on how this would be achieved. In a manner that seems to accord with pluralist and especially Marxist analyses, the unions provided the engine of this radical challenge to press ownership power and it was linked to rank and file revolt.

Different sources provided the input into the manifesto's stance on the press. Overwhelmingly, this relatively interventionist policy reflected the radicalisation of the earlier period. Here union leaderships allied themselves with constituency activists to insist that the policies rejected by the previous Labour government be implemented. By the time of the manifesto, many of those commitments remained.

The development of a relatively radical policy lends itself to the conceptions of Beer, Minkin and, also, the alternative reading of the Marxists regarding party power, outlined in the first chapter. Particularly, as with Minkin's conception, the unions prescribed the boundaries for the leadership's room of manoeuvre and the NEC and Labour Party conference were all involved in policy formation. The predominant reading of the Marxists would see the leadership as playing a more influential role than is indicated in the earlier period described here. Yet following the alternative Marxist reading, it is questionable in Miliband's account as to whether his immutable laws regarding the influence of business on the Labour leadership actually govern policy creation, as opposed to government implementation. Reflecting the tension between determinism and human agency in Marxism, Miliband recognises that the unions have been challengers to what is seen as a conservative orthodoxy. In this sense, the policy on press diversity reflects this alternative conception. Demands for diversity to aid democracy backed by the 1979 conference, and spearheaded by media trade unions, provided a summation of what had gone before. These shared and, at the same time, went beyond Scandinavian-style social market premises with regard to the need to intervene in what was perceived as a failing press market.

However, the formation of policy on press diversity was more than just a reflection of the radical policy. It went through phases. Rather than resting on the laurels of these

relatively thought-out formulae, party thinkers decided to go beyond this, towards an explicitly public service conception. In doing this, they were replicating the radical ferment still manifest in other policies influenced by the AES. Yet, their assumptions about government control of the press shared what critics had seen as weaknesses in social democracy generally. These included, at best, patronising assumptions about how state interference could 'improve' political content in the popular press. They also shared social democratic notions of the impartial and beneficent role of the state, which could not be justified in this context. Although the study group did not support the public service advocates, on the back of constituency activist support, the IPA became Labour Party policy. This happened via a process that flouted the rules the party had agreed earlier. If this had been the outcome, such a process might well have given credence to more pluralist conceptions of party policy formation. It certainly shows a process that was in disarray.

Yet, this was not the end of the story. The manifesto finally put forward was less radical than the conference policy agreed in 1979. The study group itself plumped for the OPA. However, the NEC, with the implicit backing of the leadership, rejected the OPA. It also rejected linked methods for achieving diversity proposed by the study group, which had been supported at previous party conferences. The study group itself made a retreat from interventionism by rejecting an advertising revenue board-style scheme. This reflected a political shift away from government involvement in the private sector generally prevalent in the party by 1983. Nevertheless, the OPA also identified and plugged up a gap in the previous examples of policy transfer from Scandinavian social market practice. It went well beyond classical liberal conceptions of anti-monopoly legislation to provide a credible policy for divestment of existing titles to create a more plural market. Yet, the right on the NEC rejected this in favour of a policy substantially less interventionist than that which had been agreed at party conferences.

The combination of the upsurge of a union-backed radical policy, followed by a resurgence of right-wing influence, supported by the leadership, accords both with the analysis of Minkin and that of the Marxists. Yet, there is some sign that the Marxists'

analysis can in some ways explain the facts more fully because of its emphasis on external factors. As indicated, the right were reluctant to support policies that were more radical because, again, they believed that press power was too strong to be more forcefully confronted. In other words, they acquiesced to business pressures, as the Marxists would have it.

Nevertheless, as for the *Times* takeover, it can be argued that the actions of the Labour leadership would seem to vindicate a pluralist analysis. Once again, Foot, as he had done as a Labour minister, was prepared to take on powerful media businesses; in this case, News International. And, on this occasion, the trade union leadership was not pressuring him to do so. In fact, it was quite the opposite – seeming to counter all the classic approaches. Parts of the union leadership predated the move to the right that the unions were to make on the broader range of party policies. Union activists wished to oppose the takeover. However, the union leadership fell prey to concerns to advance the Labour movement, to which press diversity was seen to be an obstacle. Faced with a choice between upholding the paper positions of their unions and accepting a market logic, which they perceived would better protect their members' terms and conditions, they chose the latter.

Press democratic control demands reflected the earlier mobilisation for party democracy, but were rejected for the manifesto. Earlier, the printers' unions had pushed for this and some of their leadership tentatively championed it, mirroring their industrial militancy. Yet, this militancy was also fractured and limited, as we have outlined. Despite the TUC and, especially the print unions, being committed to limited newspaper democracy, the unions' official representatives provided very partial support for it in Labour Party forums. At the same time, the CPF appeared. This was a media trade union and activist movement. It associated itself with democratic reform of the press. Influences on this organisation were broader than the Scandinavian-style social market and public service conceptions. In the Labour Party discussions, all pressure for press democratic control came from figures involved in this organisation, based on the union ranks. Thus, again,

there were some demands for more radical reform emanating from union ranks, but no concerted pressure from the union leadership to implement them.

Therefore, the assessment of Dennis MacShane, the former NUJ leader, who later became a New Labour minister, is only partly correct when considering the *Times* takeover and press democratic control.[644] He blames the indifference of union members to reform, as opposed to the union leaders and activists, as one reason for Labour government reluctance to support structural change.[645] Freedman rejects MacShane's assertion that union pressure to maintain terms and conditions helped quell the chance for Labour to initiate policy.[646] It seems that the reality is more complicated. The unions' membership were prepared to face profound hostility in challenging the companies' control of editorial policy on occasion with the industrial right of reply (as we shall see in this chapter's appendix), a point MacShane underplays.[647] Although print unions exercised extensive shop floor control, and those in the union leaderships involved in the party discussions advocated a maximalist position on workers' control, there was a conservative pressure to defend basic interests. This was at odds with those in the CPBF, for instance, more interested in achievable reform. As we shall see in the appendix, the unions' CPBF activists were from their middle layers.

This gives *some* credence to the claims of those such as Eric Hobswawm writing in '*The Forward March of Labour Halted?*'. In the course the debate promoted by *Marxism Today*, he suggested that the typical trade union limitations of sectionalism and syndicalism were at odds with progressive politics.[648] If we consider press diversity and

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[644] Dennis MacShane was one of those considered favourably by Kinnock for the role as first Campaigns and Communications' director. MacShane worked for eight years at the BBC before becoming president of the National Union of Journalists from 1978 to 1979 and Policy Director of the International Metal Workers Federation from 1980 to 1992. He was Director of the European Policy Institute from 1992 to 1994 before becoming an MP. He has been a Foreign Office minister since 2001. (2002. *Who's who 2002 : an annual biographical dictionary*. London: A. & C. Black.: 1395-6, 2000. *Dod's parliamentary companion 2001 : 168th year*. London: Vacher Dod.: 231).

[645] Dennis MacShane, 'Media Policy and the Left', in Seaton and Pimlott: 231.

[646] Freedman, 2000: 7.

[647] MacShane, Media Policy, in Seaton and Pimlott: 227.

[648] Eric Hobswawm, 'The Forward March of Labour Halted?', in Hobsbawm, E. J., Francis Mulhern, and Martin Jacques. 1981. *The Forward march of labour halted?* London: NLB in association with Marxism Today.: 18-19, 21, 27, 32.

participative democracy as analogous to left-libertarian issues, then the fact that unions defended particularist interests precluding press diversity would seem to relate to Herbert Kitschelt's claims regarding other European social democratic parties. It would affirm the idea that the unions inhibited the social democratic leadership in taking a stand on 'libertarian' issues.[649] It would also counter Freedman's analysis of Labour broadcast policy.

However, this divide was by no means regularly the case. For the most part, Kitschelt's assessment would not accord with the situation we are considering. The unions were pressing far more readily for programmatic demands for diversity and participative democracy than the Labour leadership, as we have seen. Although there were divisions at some points, there were other examples where the unions identified themselves at the forefront of New Left concerns for press diversity and democratic accountability.[650] In addition, as we shall see in the next chapter, those close to the Labour leadership, which those around *Marxism Today* increasingly looked to, became hostile to what they considered as a 'loony left', which supported the left-libertarian concerns Kitschelt alludes to.[651]

The centrality of the union movement would seem to accord with the analysis of Minkin, McKenzie and the Marxists. However, it may again be argued that, of these analyses, the Marxists' explanation may have more validity when we consider the counterpressure to demands for democratic involvement. Here, the pressure of outside business was key. Figures, some associated with the right in the party, argued that it would be counterproductive to radically challenge the power of newspaper business. The right did

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[649] Kitchelt, Herbert. 1994. 'Austrian and Swedish Social Democrats in Crisis', Comparative Political Studies, Vol 27, 1, April: 3-39: 23-8.

[650] Nor, incidentally, does Kitschelt's assessment accord with other aspects of Labour power relations and decision-making. Hilary Wainwright indicates that there were broader examples of where unions had challenged economism. (Hilary Wainwright, 'Response', in Hobsbawm, *Forward March*: 134-6). John Callaghan indicates that there are also examples where the unions promoted the new left concern of environmentalism. (Callaghan, *Retreat*: Chapter 4).

[651] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 71. Indeed, in his later hostility to 'identify politics', Hobswawm also appeared to distance himself from the "...the so-called 'new social movements...", this time for a reinvigorated nationalism. (Hobswawm, Eric. 1996. Identity Politics and the Left', in *New Left Review*, May-June: 45, 46 38-47).

not wish to go beyond certain reforms towards further market intervention in the face of press magnate power.

Instead, the appendix to this chapter indicates that there was a concentration on the workerist, fragmented and unformulated demands for industrial democracy contained within the industrial right of reply. However, despite its more radical democratic emphasis, the undoubted problems with such a strategy had not been confronted. This meant that it would be vulnerable to a more legalist variant. This statutory variant gained support within the Labour Party and then among the ranks of those who had championed a union-based right of reply. With regard to democratic control, therefore, the party had gone from hinting at a policy, especially on the right of reply, which had echoes of democratic control, which were well to the left of social democracy. And, in the space of a few years, it had arrived at a stance that was a policy transfer from the practice of social democratic governments and those to their right.

Freedman compellingly argues in his analysis of Labour's broadcasting policy that this 1980s study group was different to the previous one. He suggests that, unlike in the 1970s, when there was a rise of class struggle, this group coincided with a decline of workers' confidence and the rise of a left whose power was inside the party.[652]

In seeking to emphasise the relationship with the downturn in class struggle, Freedman's analysis may well explain the study group's actions. Yet, it may not be able to entirely translate to explain the relatively radical nature of the manifesto press policy. Instead, overall, it can be argued that the strength of the left in the early period surveyed in this chapter was a political reaction following the militancy of the 1970s. As one survey of Bennism probably overstates, when militancy faltered, so a section of trade unionists turned their attention to the Labour Party left.[653] Nevertheless, to an extent following Freedman, the eclipse of that militancy may well have been a key factor in explaining

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[652] He argues that an indication of this difference was that the first group met 10 times in two years, and left confidence meant it produced a clear, if unpopular, document. Such was the period of experimentation that MPs put their names to *People and the media.* Yet, the 1980s group met more than 20 times and did not produce a public written expression of their work. (Freedman, 2000: 182, Freedman, 2003: 123-124).
[653] Freeman, Alan. 1982. *The Benn heresy.* London: Pluto.: esp. 109-112.

why the left challenge was not sustained. The insularity of the Labour left, which we surveyed, could well have been another factor.

Also, another consideration, which complicates matters, should be taken into account when particularly considering the press sector. Countering the overall picture, as we have seen, printers participated in a surge of militancy, of which the CPF's launch was a political expression. Yet, this was not reflected in Labour policy. But a key reason for this was the vulnerability of the industrial right of reply, the major policy goal associated with this militancy.

While the legal right of reply remained a policy advocated by party MPs after 1983, Labour moved away from policies to aid press diversity and any form of democratic control. We shall consider this in the next chapter. It will explore whether this realignment related to sweeping changes in Labour's political marketing in the press. It shall analyse how the shifts related to the political climate. However, it will also emphasise what can be forgotten; that because of the changes' uneven nature, there was first a shift to the left in local government and this was reflected in new press policies developed by the municipal socialists.

6. Starting to mean business: Labour in the 1980s

Within a year of becoming Labour leader, former member Neil Kinnock rejoined the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. He robustly endorsed the organisation and its aims, writing: "I strongly believe that Britain's press needs to be more open, more diverse and more accountable. We need greater variety of press with a wider range of opinion and information."[654] And after standing down in 1992, following his second election defeat, the Labour leader bitterly blamed the national newspapers' narrow political range. Kinnock openly wondered how Labour could win, facing press distortion. He endorsed the claim from the former Conservative Party treasurer that the newspapers' intervention had been crucial in Labour's defeat.[655]

However, in between these events what was striking – despite Kinnock's seeming support for press diversity – was how this issue dropped further down the political agenda. Dennis MacShane commented in 1985 that there had been "...no firm commitment from Kinnock or Hattersley, or the rest of the Shadow Cabinet to effective media reform...".[656] This may not have been *entirely* true for all the time they were Labour leaders. However, as was judged in 1989, they did not fight for the agreed reforms particularly publicly or effectively.[657]

In addition, the solutions offered became more market-oriented and, for a significant time, more nationalistic. We will view how the shift in policy from democratic control and a more interventionist diversity strategy towards more market-oriented policies fitted in to the more general pattern of Labour power relations and politics. To do this, we will first consider Kinnock's broader policy trajectory and how external factors, both national and international, influenced this.

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[654] Neil Kinnock, 'Letter to the CPBF', May 9 1984, Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archive.
[655] Jones, Eileen. 1994. *Neil Kinnock.* London: Robert Hale.: 189-90, Freedman, 2000: 216, Freedman, 2003: 157.
[656] *Free Press* 28, March April 1985. See also Dennis MacShane, 'Media Policy and the Left' in Curran, *Bending*: 218, 230-2.
[657] Andrews, J. P. 1989. *The failure of the News on Sunday.* Brighton: University of Sussex.: 6.

We shall also note that two processes proceeded in tandem, nevertheless. Structural change, in part to aid Labour Party representation, became less prominent. At the same time, the leadership reverted to a previous media-led campaigning strategy and developed it. This was considered successful. Some trade unionists who had advocated press structural change to advance Labour movement representation, promoted it. However, it shall be indicated that the strategy placed plans for press structural change in difficulty, as it was counterproductive for those trying to woo newspaper businesses.

PARTY POLICY FROM 1983-1992

Organisational changes

Neil Kinnock faced a huge problem on being elected leader in 1983. Labour had just suffered a crushing defeat.[658] The party's election organisation had been seen to be the opposite – disorganised. Kinnock, on being elected with support from across the party, exploited this need for order out of chaos. The previous chapter had seen an upsurge of activist demands for democratic accountability. Kinnock accepted the right's argument that the reasons for Labour's defeat included 'unrepresentative' activists' influence over party policy creation. This was despite the fact that, as we saw, the trade union right had organisational control by 1983.

The leader resolved to remedy this by instituting a series of organisational changes to shift power from the activists and the NEC to the centre. Kinnock aimed to aggregate policy creation under centralised leadership control.[659] As we shall see, Labour's press and media communications was key to this change.

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[658] It was Labour's worst defeat since 1900, with regard to votes per candidate. Labour had only polled 2% more than the Liberal-SDP Alliance. (Shaw, Eric. 2000. 'The Wilderness Years, 1979-1994' in The Labour Party : a centenary history, edited by Brian Brivati and Richard Heffernan. Basingstoke: Macmillan: 117).

[659] Shaw, *1979*, Shaw, *1945*, Seyd: 22-3, Hughes Colin, A., and Patrick Wintour. 1990. *Labour rebuilt : the new model party*. London: Fourth Estate., Panitch and Leys, Callaghan, *Retreat*. This process also included other committee reorganisation and a shake-up at Labour's Walworth Road headquarters. (Shaw, *1979*, Callaghan, *Retreat*, Heffernan, Richard, and Mike Marqusee. 1992. *Defeat from the jaws of victory : inside Kinnock's Labour Party*. London ; New York: Verso., Panitch and Leys) Kinnock's justification for this stance was that "... the condition of the party made management an obligation – so I got on with it." (Kinnock, N. (1994) 'Reforming the Labour Party', *Contemporary Record*, 8 (3), pp. 535-54, 537. Also

Central to this reorganisation, the leadership abandoned the NEC study group system, which originated much press policy. The loose arrangement with the often-leftish academic advisors ended.[660] In a prelude to the new press and media strategy, research secretary Geoff Bish argued that new policies should predominately be created to support campaigns. This was because the party's problem was "...not the detail of policy ...but credibility and image". In the study groups' place, came a smaller and more tightly controlled system of joint Shadow Cabinet-NEC committees.[661] The Shadow Cabinet would now have more power in deciding policy, as all policy would have to have its agreement – to the CLPD constitutional reformers' concern.[662] The insightful commentator Eric Shaw identifies that, by 1986, the leader and senior Shadow Cabinet members had responsibility for policy determination.[663]

Kinnock eventually garnered resources to finance this centralisation. He used the 'Short money', which provided state aid to opposition parties. As opposed to when the Conservatives were in opposition, the frontbench placed the money under its control, so that the Shadow Cabinet would not be dependent on research instituted by the party.[664] Under Kinnock, the large sums involved, together with extra union funding, provided

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cited in Panitch and Leys: 219, Fielding, Steven. 1997. *The Labour Party : 'socialism' and society since 1951*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.: 128).

[660] The hard right on the NEC had successfully called for a review of the system before the election to "...reduce costs and rationalise the policy formation process...". It was proposed and seconded at the February 1983 NEC by Betty Boothroyd and Denis Healey. (Research Secretary, 'Extract from RD 2889', 1993). Benn quotes Healey tellingly saying that: "[W]e don't want to be controlled by model resolutions from CLPs or the LCC... The Conference cannot tell MPs how to vote against their consciences ... We want more tolerance of the Shadow Cabinet by the Party and the NEC must accept the former's leadership role." (Benn, *The end of an era*: 303).

[661] Interestingly, however, one area where he specified more policy work was needed was on press regulation. (Research Secretary, 'Policy Development: A Further Note', Home Policy Committee, RD:2902, November 1983, Shaw, Wilderness: 119).

[662] This was said to 'solve the problem' which notably had arisen with the 1979 manifesto, where the NEC and the Shadow Cabinet had not agreed. The 'problem' had been resolved in favour of the leadership and the senior members of the frontbench, rather than the party representatives on the NEC. (Research Secretary, 'Policy Development: A Further Note' Home Policy Committee, RD:2902, November 1983, Shaw, Wilderness: 119, CLPD Newsletter, No.46 (Conference Edition), September/October 1992).

[663] Shaw, Wilderness: 119.

[664] Panitch and Leys: 178, 219, Heffernan and Marqusee: 109-110, Callaghan, *Retreat*: 192-3. The significance of this was not lost on the left. As a leading reform figure, Benn accorded the battle over this money allocation with the same significance as the three constitutional demands of the left that were referred to in the previous chapter. (Benn, *Conflicts of interest*: 497).

resources for more full-time policy advisers, whose loyalty was seen to be to the leader, rather than the party. For the first time, the leadership had developed a policy research and advice wing under its control, with the unions' acquiescence.[665]

Meanwhile, the 1984-1985 miners' strike defeat emboldened Kinnock and strengthened the Labour right, in a key turning point. For the leadership, the 'lost year', during which it had been "...very difficult to open up the other ideological challenges...", was over.[666] Along with the print unions' defeat, which we will explore later, the strike's collapse had a numbing effect on Labour movement radicalism.[667] It undermined the activist left, as the pressure from the unions faltered. The strike also provided a catalyst for a division between the party's traditional left and New Left and what became known as the 'soft left'. Dispute over tactics caused division.[668] The *Militant* supporters' expulsion provided a further schism.[669] The realignment, centred on the Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC), most notably consisted of the soft left's decision to support Kinnock on the NEC

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[665] Shaw, *1979*: 112, Callaghan, *Retreat*: 192-3.

[666] Kinnock's chief of staff Charles Clarke interviewed by Philip Gould, in Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 42.

[667] Heffernan and Marqusee: 61.

[668] One flashpoint was the failure of left union leaders such as Tom Sawyer to go along with the call of Benn and Dennis Skinner for strike action to support the miners' cause. (Heffernan and Marqusee: 68-70, Shaw, Wilderness: 122).

[669] If *Militant* had not existed, there is a sense in which those wanting to divide the left would have needed to create this 'red bogey'. Opposition could build an alliance, which stretched from the hard right to the non-aligned New Left. The latter's opposition could be whipped up because of *Militant*'s blanket opposition to Black Sections and women's self-organisation. *Militant* could be relied on to fuel these concerns. Episodes one could consider include the Sam Bond affair, where a *Militant* supporter was parachuted in from London to 'represent' black people on Liverpool council. (Wainwright, Hilary. 1987. *Labour : a tale of two parties*. London: Hogarth.: 132). Another was when it organised a demonstration at the NEC in opposition to Black Sections. However, attempts to stir up opposition to *Militant* in order to push sections of the left towards an accommodation with Neil Kinnock were deeply compromised. It should be remembered that the demonstration against black sections was in *support of the leadership on the NEC* who wanted to oppose self-organisation. (McSmith, Andy. 1996. *Faces of Labour : the inside story*. London: Verso.: 212). On the soft left's view of Militant see, for instance, David Blunkett, 'The perils of thinking for oneself', *Tribune*, May 23 1986 and Williams, Ian. 1986. 'Left in the middle of a bid to tolerate the intolerable', *Tribune*, May 30 1986. For a critical view, see Heffernan and Marqusee: 68-70. Kinnock revived the attack against *Militant*, following the disciplinary measures taken under Foot, with his broadside at the 1985 party conference. (Shaw, *Discipline*: 259-90, Shaw, *1979*: 35-6, Shaw, *1945*: 174-5, Elliott, Gregory. 1993. *Labourism and the English genius : the strange death of Labour England?* London ; New York: Verso.: 137, Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 44, Hughes and Wintour: 9-10, Anderson, Paul, and Nyta Mann. 1997. *Safety first : the making of new Labour*. London: Granta.: 192, Leapman, Michael. 1987. *Kinnock*. London: Unwin Hyman.: 100-104, Hattersley, *Who goes home?*: 274-5). It subsequently led to 112 Labour Party members being expelled for being members of *Militant*. (Heffernan and Marqusee: 261-4).

in a failed attempt to prise him away from the right.[670] At the same time that, nationally, Labour politics was shifting to the right, another form of municipal socialism from that of *Militant* had developed at a local level. As we shall see in Appendix 3 to this chapter, at its most distinctive, the municipal left, most associated with the GLC, reflected the New Left's willingness to reconsider the relationship between local democracy, public participation and economic planning.

The development of this was interlinked with another influence on the Labour Party. This was also partly articulated through the municipal socialists.

Some External Factors: the Soviet Union, Thatcher and the market

Along with Thatcherism, the inefficient Soviet economies' disintegration provided one of the more important external influences on Labour Party thinking in this period. The relatively tiny, but influential, Eurocommunist wing of the British Communist Party and its journal *Marxism Today* was a major conduit for articulating the effects of this into the Labour Party's ideology.[671]

Despite possible alternatives, a critical, but sympathetic reading of Hayek's ideas influenced British left thinkers, when attempting to explain the Soviet economies' gross inefficiencies.[672] Economists wanted to introduce markets to regulate planning and

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[670] This had been formed in 1978, as what would now be termed a Bennite 'think tank'. But its politics had shifted. By 1983, it supported Kinnock's campaign for party leadership. After that, it championed this centre-left coalition around Kinnock. (Heffernan and Marqusee: 68-70).

[671] In tandem with other European parties, the 1970s and early 1980s had seen the growth of Eurocommunism within the party.

[672] Hayek was most associated with the view that the profound problems with the Soviet economies were based on the inability of them to plan rationally, because it was not practically possible to calculate prices. His view had been the subject of a huge debate in the 1930s. A Polish economist, Oskar Lange, countered Hayek. He considered that planners could use consumer demand prices as the guiding criteria for resource production and allocation, creating computational 'virtual markets'. To examine this debate, see, for example, Taylor, Fred Manville, Benjamin Evans Lippincott, and Oskar Lange. 1938. *On the economic theory of socialism.*, Hayek Friedrich, A. von, von Mises Ludwig, N. G. Pierson, George Halm, and Enrico Barone. 1935. *Collectivist economic planning : critical studies on the possibilities of Socialism by N.G.Pierson, Ludwig von Mises, Georg Halm, and Enrico Barone.* London: Routledge. and Lavoie. One influential book in Britain, which shared the critical but sympathetic view of Hayek and gained a wider reading than just among specialists, was Nove, Alec. 1983. *The economics of feasible socialism.* London ; Boston: G. Allen & Unwin. Others had argued that Soviet inefficiency was bound up with the lack of

increase consumer choice.[673] The best aspects of the two worlds could be married. Market allocation's inequity would be tempered by planning. Efficiency would be sought without either market anarchy or planning rigidity.

Marxism Today championed this new thinking among the Labour leadership both directly and through the soft left.[674] Being closer to the Soviet bloc than much of the left, the Eastern states' visible collapse led the journal's proponents to become early market converts. They gloried in its role as the purveyor of consumer choice and linked this to an understandable awe for Thatcherism's theoretical power and proselytising zeal. Thinkers in the British Communist and Labour parties considered that Thatcherism would need to be contested on its own ground by 'learning to love the market', albeit in a limited way.[675]

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democratic control over Soviet planning. Some of these left critics of the Soviet Union were favourably disposed to the idea of virtual markets. For, albeit inadequate, attempts to marry the two traditions see Mandel, Ernest. 1968. *Marxist economic theory*. London: Merlin Press. and Callinicos, Alex. 1991. *The revenge of history : Marxism and the East European revolutions*. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press.

[673] This was because they identified that the Soviet economies were effective in heavy industrial production but less so in producing consumer goods.

[674] As the journal's former editor put it in 1990, the magazine made "...much of the intellectual running for Labour's Kinnockite revolution". Its role was to be as an "...ideological protagonist against the hard left". (Jacques, Martin. 1990. 'Requiem for a revolution', *Times*, September 12 1990). An early indication of the separation of the soft left was the transformation of *Tribune* from its support for Bennism from the start of 1985. Another landmark came in May of that year when *New Socialist* published an article 'Bennism without Benn', which was widely discussed in the national press. (Heffernan and Marqusee: 68-70, Shaw, Wilderness: 121-3). Very tentatively at first, the soft left supported leadership calls for the market mechanism's implementation. And it explicitly cited the Soviet bloc's failures as its starting point. (LCC, 'Mailing', June 1984, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archive). An indication of the shift at the higher levels of the party was that the leadership-dominated NEC called on the Labour Party conference to vote down a demand for a 'campaign for democratic public ownership and socialist economic planning' at the 1983 conference. (CLPD, 'CLPD Newsletter', London: CLPD: 1983). As early as 1984, the LCC proposed a statement of aims for the Labour Party, which was to provide a basis for the Policy Review conducted after 1987. While still supporting industrial democracy, the market was seen as a tool in ensuring decentralisation and local autonomy, to replace democratic control. (LCC, 'Draft Long Term Aims', passed 17 November 1984: 2-4, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archive). By 1986, the soft left was opposing renationalisation of privatised utilities, counterposing to this forms of marketised social ownership. (LCC, 'Key policies for Labour's general election manifesto' and Macpherson, Hugh. 1986. 'Social ownership wrongfoots the Right', *Tribune*, September 12, 1986).

[675] Two very politically different commentators, Ivor Crewe and Richard Heffernan, are among those who note Thatcher's influence on Labour's politics. (Crewe, Ivor, 'The Thatcher Legacy' in King Anthony, Stephen. 1993. *Britain at the polls, 1992*. Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers.: 1-28, Heffernan, Richard. 2001. *New Labour and Thatcherism : political change in Britain*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000).

The market would replace democratic control as an effective allocator and distributor. Historically, the Soviet bloc had influenced Labour Party thought towards state intervention without popular participation and control. As the sun set on the old regimes, there was a failure to win an argument that state intervention could have only been effective under democratic control.

In tandem with this, the leadership developed policies more amenable to the market. With its organisational domination over policy creation, this became the party's position. The Labour leadership pressed for social ownership and away from nationalised control.[676] It also discarded party pledges to workplace democracy across industry.[677] Social ownership blurred the lines between market hybrids and the public ownership and democratic control associated with the AES. While more radical than the top-down nationalisation of the past, it was also a significant step towards embracing the market. However, translated into the press policy context, it could be easily associated with a social market perspective. If support for co-operatives had been applied across the newspaper market it would have represented a radical and bold move, in line with the democratising alternatives we have explored in past chapters. However, the social ownership perspective was only fitfully applied to the press.

As for intervention in the economy, although there was some continuity, Labour went into the 1987 election committed to a form less pronounced than that argued for in 1983.[678] The AES was rejected and the commitment to Keynesianism became more ambiguous.[679] By 1987, the Labour leadership justified interventionism primarily to

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[676] Social ownership's embrace prompted a prominent advocate to claim this as a "...victory for the soft left". Although, how much the soft left was influencing the leadership and how much influence was in the other direction regarding this was open to question. (Nigel Williamson, 'Whatever happened to the realignment of the Left?', *Tribune*, 26 September 1986).

[677] It was replaced by a commitment to "...legislation to foster good industrial relations and democratic participation..." in the 1987 manifesto. (Shaw, *1979*: 12-13, 47-50).

[678] An example of the continuity was that in both elections Labour promised interventionism to provide a neo-corporate managing of the market, where the state, science and technology would be pitted against finance and the City. (Callaghan, *Retreat*: 120).

[679] One example of this, the importance of which will become clearer in the next chapter, when we discuss globalisation in more detail, was that Labour abandoned its policy of exchange controls, following Thatcher's financial market liberalisation. (Callaghan, *Retreat*: 119, Anderson and Mann: 81).

bolster market vitality, rather than redistributive justice.[680] In the debates following 1987, soft left Keynesian advocates would further emphasise this international market competitiveness motivation, both in general policy and with regard to the press and media.

The Policy Review

The 1987 election failure steered the leadership further on a pro-market course. In the period up to 1989, soft left figure Bryan Gould championed Keynesian interventionism.[681] Yet, by the late 1980s, the leadership was convinced that financial capital, which had been further strengthened when the government freed up exchange controls in 1979, was too powerful to challenge head-on.

The 'French lesson' that Labour learnt from Mitterrand's reflationary failure was that the international economy more powerfully determined nation states' economic management.[682] As the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, paving the way for capitalism's zone of influence to be expanded, and as ten years of Thatcher's rule had changed the political landscape, so the leadership accepted a new logic. This shift was latterly justified by the notion that the threat of capital flight had overwhelmingly weakened nation states in a

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[680] Gone was the redistributive pledge to make a "...fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families". By 1987, following on from the 'Investing in People' campaign of 1986, Labour informed the electorate that investment in employment and skills was needed to "...make our country more efficient, more competitive and more socially just"; in that order. (Labour, Party. 1983. *The new hope for Britain : Labour's manifesto 1983*. London: Labour Party., Labour, Party. 1986. *Investing in people*. London: Labour Party., Labour, Party. 1987. *Britain will win : Labour manifesto, June 1987*. London: Labour Party.).

[681] He was one influence on Labour maintaining the view that the City of London and the power of financial capital should be reined in. (Labour Party. 1989. *Meet the challenge, make the change : a new agenda for Britain : final report of Labour's policy review for the 1990s*. London: Labour Party., Driver, Stephen, and Luke Martell. 1998. *New Labour : politics after Thatcherism*. Cambridge, U.K. ; Malden, Mass.: Polity Press in association with Blackwell.: 17-8, Anderson and Mann: 71-2, Ramsay, Robin. 1998. *Prawn cocktail party : the hidden power of New Labour*. London: Vision Paperbacks, 1998.: 116). Former diplomat, Oxford University law lecturer and TV presenter, Bryan Gould was a member of the shadow cabinet from 1986 to 1992. He was Labour spokesman on trade and industry, on economy and party campaigns, and national heritage, which included press policy. He retired from British political life to become vice chancellor of Waikato University, New Zealand. (2002. *Who's who 2002 : an annual biographical dictionary*. London: A. & C. Black.: 836 and 2000. *Dod's parliamentary companion 2001 : 168th year*. London: Vacher Dod.: 454).

[682] For any nation state to ignore this was to "...invite disaster as the French discovered". (MacShane, Denis, and Society Fabian. 1986. *French lessons for Labour*. London: Fabian Society, 1986.: 5).

qualitatively new way, making national Keynesian intervention impossible. The globalisation rhetoric's influence on press and media ownership will become clearer in the next chapter. For now, it is important to note Keynesian interventionism's decline.

In its place came 'supply-side socialism'. Under this, interventionism across the economy would more clearly replicate the manner with which Britain's existing minimalist press laws were supposed to have operated. Kinnock outlined in a Policy Review document that the state would not directly intervene to reorganise markets, but regulate "...commercial behaviour in the interests of consumers..." and restrict "... monopoly practices in the interests of competition".[683] Business would "...get on with business".[684] The state would become more of an 'enabler', similar to the *Marxism Today*'s vision, now championed by the SDP-Liberal Alliance.[685] These monumental shifts would help shape the approach taken to press ownership.

Despite all these changes, which were meant to aid electability – and the fact that Labour went into the election in a lead buoyed up by opposition to the community charge – Labour failed once again in the 1992 election.

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[683] Labour Party, *Meet the challenge*: 6.

[684] These were the words of press reformer Austin Mitchell. He viewed that rather than "...owning, interfering, regulating, planning...", the state should "...let business get on with business...". (Mitchell, Austin. 1987. 'The party of producers and consumers', *Independent*, July 24 1987).

[685] Meacher, Michael. 1987. 'A new vision of socialist individualism', *Independent*, 16 July 1987, Williams, Shirley. 1987. 'Essential vision of the enabling state', *Independent*, July 29 1987.

The municipal left, Labour's early response and the *News on Sunday*

As we shall see in the appendix on the cultural industries approach, the municipal socialists' legacy was mixed. Both approaches provided a justification for a pro-market emphasis on media policy in the party. But their effect on press policy in this regard was not as great as that on broadcasting. Both also had a radical edge, with the municipal socialists, particularly exploring forms of democratic ownership.

The municipal left's early influence was to provide a renewed impetus to democratise and diversify the press. Labour activists and the unions reacted to what they considered as the press's ruthless 1983 election coverage by going on the offensive, rather than seeking greater representation by wooing the press. Indicating the same underlying tension between diversity and Labour movement representation we saw before, they responded in two ways to challenge this bias. One way was with a motion to create a Labour newspaper, following on from the discussions culminating in the McCarthy report, referred to in the last chapter.[686] The legacy of this will be discussed later. The 1983 conference also backed policy that went far further than the election manifesto to democratise and diversify the press.

The conference call for diversity included a demand to reinstate the problematic Independent Press Authority as party policy. But it also called for democracy both within newspapers and among the new bodies that would control them. Influenced by the GLC's work, rather than the radical notions coming from the TUC, the conference called for a

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[686] The 1983 conference saw a call come from 30 constituencies for Labour and the TUC to jointly to set up a daily newspaper. Rather simplistically, this was seen as an answer to election defeat. The proposer of the conference motion saw the paper as a direct tool of the Labour movement. It would reverse a situation where "...we went into the general election unarmed and, in effect, with workers unprepared". A Labour Press Campaign was set up at the conference. (Labour Party, Conference. 1983. *Report of the annual conference of the Labour Party*. London: Labour Party.: 203-4, 208-9, *Free Press* 21, November/December 1983).

new body, the National Media Enterprise Agency that would aid new newspaper ventures.[687] The new body's terminology reflected the cultural industry approach's marketised conception. Yet, the conference also envisaged that this body would be democratically owned and accountable to both consumers and producers – "...owned and operated through accountable, democratic machinery by those they serve and employ...". It also considered that, like the GLC, journalist/printworker co-operatives among the nationals would be supported. The conference intended that the NEC would use the motion as a framework in order to develop policy, as had the previous subcommittees. Instead, the NEC representative, in his abortive call to remit, indicated that the media study group could be relied on to consider the issues.[688] This plea flew in the face of the fact that the media study group had been disbanded.

However, Labour's interest in the press became much more focused on seeking representation in the newspapers' pages. After a lull, press hostility continued under Kinnock. The Labour hierarchy renewed an interest in political marketing. The failure of alternative methods to increase Labour representation, with the *News on Sunday*, put this initiative into sharp relief.

As we have indicated, in 1992 Kinnock felt that the defeat could be laid at the newspapers' door. However debatable this notion was, the press provided brutally biased coverage of him, the Labour Party and especially its left.[689] (Kinnock also brought some problems on himself.[690] He laid himself open to accusations of windbaggery with his gusty, repetitive, sub-clause-ridden rhetoric, evident even in the drafts of his speeches).[691] Nevertheless, the miners' strike ended Kinnock's press honeymoon.[692] By 1985, Kinnock's press office saw itself as "...under siege...".[693]

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[687] The TUC had backed the creation of another new body, the National Press Finance Corporation. This would oversee advertising distribution and new launch funding. (Trades Union Congress. Annual, Conference. 1983. *Report of the 115th annual Trades Union Congress*. London: T.U.C.: 327-8).

[688] Labour Party, *Conference 1983*: 205-6, 211.

[689] See Hollingsworth, and Heffernan and Marqusee. On the *Sun*'s treatment of Kinnock see Greenslade, *Press Gang*: 608-610.

[690] One problem was his macho personality, which was exposed when he got embroiled in a fight in Ealing.

[691] Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archive.

[692] From then on, one Kinnock biographer considers that: "The inequality in the battle between the Conservatives and Labour in the way the mirrors of the media were used to refract stories ... were such that

Bias abounded in the lead-up to the 1987 and 1982 elections. The 'loony left offensive' before the 1987 vote subjected municipal socialists to inaccuracies, innuendo and personal attacks. An extraordinary admission by the Bermondsey constituency's defeated Conservative candidate, Robert Hughes, demonstrated the biased treatment dealt out to Peter Tatchell. He said a newspaper journalist had told him that: "...we had to ignore you so as to make sure that we got the result that we wanted and that the Labour Party did not win that by-election".[694]

The majority Conservative press famously targeted the party in the lead-up to the 1992 election. The tabloids gleefully seized on the £1,000 a head tax story concocted by Conservative Central Office.[695] The newspapers vented anti-Labour spleen in the campaign itself.[696] The debacle around the 'Jennifer's ear' broadcast was a subject for scorn. The last week saw a particular onslaught. As the SCA's Philip Gould put it, the press on the day before the election was "...not so much negative as apocalyptic".[697] Notable examples, among others, were the *Sun*'s pre-poll nine-page 'Nightmare on Kinnock Street' special and the paper's witty pre-election day coverage.[698] This concern about the coverage Labour received would also be a factor in press ownership policy.

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small mistakes by Kinnock were magnified into huge errors while big mistakes by Thatcher were microscopized down into miniscule faux pas." (Drower, G. M. F. 1994. *Kinnock*. South Woodham Ferrers: Publishing Corporation.: 189-90).

[693] Philip Gould, ' Communications Review', December 22 1985, Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archive.

[694] HOC February 3 1989, col. 605. Deirdre Wood was another notable victim.

[695] Kenneth Newton ' Caring and Competence: The Long, Long Campaign' in King Anthony, Stephen. 1993. *Britain at the polls, 1992*. Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers.: 174-5, 189-90, Shaw, *1979*: 136-7, Heffernan and Marqusee: 307-8.

[696] In one of a series of hostile front pages, the *Daily Mail* led with a "warning" of "...higher mortgage payments. There is no doubt about it", it confidently asserted. (Comment, 'Warning', *Daily Mail*, April 7, 1992).

[697] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 153. See also Miller, W. 1992. 'I am what I read', *New Statesman & Society*, April 24: 17.

[698] It provided the witty editorial claim that: "We don't want to influence you in your final judgement on who will be Prime Minister! But if it's a bald bloke with wispy red hair and two Ks in his surname, we'll see you at the airport." (*Sun*, April 8 1992). On the election day its editorial proclaimed: "If Kinnock wins today will the last person to leave Britain please turn out the lights." (Editorial, 'If Kinnock wins today will the last person to leave Britain please turn out the lights', April 9 1992). See also Seymour-Ure, C. 'Characters and Assassinations: Portrayals of John Major and Neil Kinnock in *The Daily Mirror* and *The Sun*' in Crewe, Ivor, and Brian Gosschalk. 1995. *Political communications : the general election campaign of 1992*. Cambridge [England] ; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press.: 137-159, McKie, Fact

Diversity, Representation, Democratic Control and the News on Sunday

Labour's most visible early reaction to this press bias did not originate on the national stage. The *News on Sunday* was originally conceived by the municipal socialists as one way of countering the hostile coverage of the 'loony left'. In addition, it provided the most notable example of the GLEB's strategy to increase diversity and expand producer democracy in the press. Kinnock himself was enthusiastic.[699] The newspaper was meant to rejuvenate municipal socialism. Instead, the title became "...another nail in its coffin...".[700]

In order to consider the options for funding, the GLEB asked James Curran and others in 1983 to map out how it should intervene in the press sector.[701] The GLEB also part-funded the market research, along with a range of unions, which would be crucial in deciding the title's direction.[702] The GLEB stipulated conditions about the structure of the company overseeing the title, in return for funding, leading to some democratic control based on a Founder's Trust.[703] The most extensive account of the paper blames its

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is free: 121-136, Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 153-4, Bennett, C., 'Prodigal *Sun* gives fatted calf to Blair' *Guardian*, March 19 1997. Such was the level of vitriol, that Hugo Young claimed in the *Guardian* at the time that "Mr Kinnock can safely be said to have endured more public insults over a longer period than any other figure in British public life." (Quoted in King Anthony, Stephen. 1993. *Britain at the polls, 1992*. Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers.: 178). Exceptions to this could have included Benn and Scargill.

[699] "Alan Hayling used to meet him regularly... He was saying 'I have just had a call from Neil and he is saying how really important this is, and how he is backing it big time and he really wants to see it work.' He came to the offices, I think he officially opened them." (The paper's national regional manager, Tony Cook, interview with author, March 23 2002).

[700] This was to be particularly the case with the municipal left, which was already on its last legs before the title appeared. (Chippindale, Peter, and Chris Horrie. 1988. *Disaster! : the rise and fall of News on Sunday : anatomy of a business failure*. London: Sphere.: ix, See also Anon. 1988. 'Radical left collapse shock' *Economist*, April 30 1988).

[701] Curran, James. 1983. *Report on the London press sector*. London: Greater London Enterprise Board..

[702] Chippindale and Horrie, *News on Sunday*: 15-20, 30-33.

[703] The GLEB successfully pressed for there to be a controlling group, which would protect the paper from an outside takeover. This became the independent Founder's Trust, which would check that the paper stayed true to its original commitments. The Founders were to have a veto over key decisions. Chippindale and Horrie, *News on Sunday*: 30-33, 53-4, Anon., 'Control Systems', *Free Press* 39, February 1987. It would ultimately oversee the editor, who would have day-to-day charge, along with its 'watchdog' a product development committee composed of some Founders and staff. The head of the GLC's Popular Planning Unit Hillary Wainwright, who had personally helped finance the venture, chaired this. According to two of the paper's staff, it had been structured to involve "...as many people as possible in decision-

downfall on this participatory democracy aspect.[704] The highly-talented journalist John Pilger also considered that the convoluted and muddled decision-making process had driven him out.[705] So, it appears clear that democratic participation was the overriding problem. Or was it?

On inspection, it appears that the structure was more labyrinthine and unworkable than entirely participative. The insiders Chippindale and Horrie describe the Founder's Trust as "...[e]ssentially a self-appointed and unaccountable..." grouping.[706] Another of those closely involved accepts that the workforce only elected a small minority.[707] In addition, the regional structure to provide readers input into the paper was ineffectual and eventually collapsed.[708] As Chippindale and Horrie make clear, in as much as the paper provided for participation, it was a self-governing operation that did not include the professional journalists in decision-making.[709] This process was not one to judge the effectiveness of participative democracy and accountability by.[710] It was substituting

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making...". Managers were meant to accountable to each other and to the Founders. "All decisions were to be made by consensus and committee." (Chippindale and Horrie, *News on Sunday*: 15, 125, 242).

[704] Horrie, as a worker-director and Chippindale, in their popular book on the affair, are particularly scathing about the "...unworkable management structure..." with no clear arrangement for decision-making. They conclude that: "In so far as there was a central cause ... it was the structure of the company that killed the *News on Sunday*." (*Ibid.*: especially 224).

[705] John Pilger, 'The birth of a new *Sun*?, *New Statesman*, January 2 1997. Horrie and Chippindale scathingly describe the build-up to the title's launch as mired by this cumbersome arrangement, with its unending string of committee meetings. They emphasise that: "Unfortunately, this is not how papers work. They are shaped by strong individuals – either editors given a free hand or interventionist propreitors....". (*Ibid.*: 122, 124).

[706] *Ibid.*: 53.

[707] The initial investors had agreed the remaining members and plans to rotate these people had been dropped. The newspaper did not run as a co-operative, but a private limited company. According to Tony Cook, this was decided so that potential investors would not be deterred. (Tony Cook interview). See also Allaun, Frank. 1988. *Spreading the news : a guide to media reform*. Nottingham: Spokesman. 57.

[708] The paper's national regional manager, who was to oversee this, admitted: "The initial research was that the absolute core base of the readership had been set up by that national regional network, which had been incredibly successful. I mean there were a lot of people who were willing to put a lot of time and effort to making sure that the *News on Sunday* worked. One of the great tragedies is that that was never properly harnessed, and was never properly tailored into the paper." (Tony Cook interview).

[709] As they indicate, *not one* member of the Founders, the management team or the board of management "...had even earned a regular living from national print journalism". (Chippindale and Horrie, *News on Sunday*: 125).

[710] Professional journalists were employed on the paper, on the one side. But inexperienced journalists, on the other side, made the decisions. One of those involved who was not a newspaper journalist, and was very critical of the journalists, admitted that this "...was part of the problem. A lot of the journalists that were hired were not members of the New Left community. Most of the rest of us had known each other for ten or fifteen years, or known of each other, being involved in the Labour Party and other organisations; CND or

management authoritarianism with a mixture of politically-dominated utopianism and admiration for the cult of the British amateur.

Instead, one can question whether the newspaper's downfall was primarily caused by *its* structure, whatever its undoubted flaws. Different writers have pointed to the *newspaper market's* structure for its failure.[711] The original GLEB report could have backed a more upmarket title, with higher advertising rates and lower circulation – a more left-wing Sunday *Guardian*-style title, for example. Yet, perhaps surprisingly, considering the problems Curran had identified with a higher circulation title aimed a lower-income readers in an unreformed press market, the report advised aiming more in this direction.[712]

The *News on Sunday* took this direction. The feasibility study's market research came up with the astonishing conclusion that a newspaper aimed downmarket of the *Mail on Sunday* would have sales of up to 1.5 million.[713] Editor Keith Sutton, who formerly oversaw the News International protesters' tabloid parody *Wapping Post*, pitched the paper in a much more tabloid direction than originally planned.[714] The initial issue sold

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whatever it was....A number of us were journalists but were not newspaper journalists and that was the problem. We had ... no real newspaper journalists amongst that community, and so there was a distrust that was built up both ways." (Tony Cook interview).

[711] Andrews, Allaun, Frank. 1988. *Spreading the news : a guide to media reform*. Nottingham: Spokesman. 62.

[712] It called for a paper "...politically to the left of the Daily Mirror, while at the same time adopting a tone and popular idiom in its entertainment coverage that melds with the political personality of the paper." (Curran, James. 1983. *Report on the London press sector*. London: Greater London Enterprise Board.: 56-8). The assessment to aim for a more tabloid mass-market title was said to chime with that of those in the GLEB who were enthusiastic about launching a new national title. (Chippindale and Horrie, *News on Sunday*: 17-21).

[713] This influenced some of the paper's initial advocates, who had originally planned to go for a narrower 'quality' sector, that space existed for a more mass-market paper.

[714] One insider believes that the actual newspaper was pitched far more in a tabloid direction than the feasibility studies suggested: "The research said to aim just below where the initial one had been pitched, and we pitched at exactly the *Mail on Sunday* readership... It is up to you to judge whether you felt the issues were way downmarket than the *Mail on Sunday*, but I would think they were. Keith [Sutton] had a particular notion that you could not be a sub-*Mail* tabloid, that either you were a tabloid or you were a *Mail*... I argued very hard against that and said that you could be a slightly downmarket *Mail*." (Tony Cook interview). The Founders backed Sutton. The market research was done by RSGB, which had previously done the market research that had questioned the viability of the *Scottish Daily News*, before its launch. But its view was contrary to what its research had revealed about the *News*. (Chippindale and Horrie, *News on Sunday*: 34-39, Andrews: 8-13). A possible subsidiary factor that has been ignored in other accounts was the pressure to win backers in the union movement and among the Labour authorities. Other Labour

only about a third of the most optimistic estimates and was judged to be of poor quality.[715] Within days of Labour's election defeat, the title went into voluntary receivership.

Thus, a key factor in the *News on Sunday*'s downfall was the newspaper market's bipolarisation, determined by advertisers. It fed on the inclination of some to go downmarket, which the market research bolstered.[716] Andrews, and, from a different premise, Chippindale and Horrie, question whether a more upmarket title would have been viable.[717] This is indeed worth discussing. Such a title would be an upmarket one to attract advertisers.[718]

However, the main conclusion is that such a title as the *News on Sunday* was conceived to be – that is a tabloid aimed a majority lower sociological class readership – was not viable. This was unless it garnered a readership on the optimistic side of the RSGB's questionable estimates. This was bifurcation's effect. The *News on Sunday* could only have survived this by going upmarket to attract readers with the financial clout required by advertisers. Government intervention had altered a comparable situation in other

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councils than the GLC, which had been influenced by municipal socialist ideas, also invested in the project. They mainly used their employees' pension funds. These councils included Manchester and Sheffield and the London boroughs of Brent, Haringey and Lambeth. However, it was not just the councils associated with municipal socialism that put money into the project. One insider notes that the large investors had little influence on the newspaper. (Tony Cook interview) Yet, an appeal of the paper was that it was meant to be read by those in the union movement. If the paper had been aimed at a sociological composition entirely different to the unions' membership, then this may have deterred union funding.

[715] From then on, it wavered between different approaches and styles and the sales never reached those of the first edition. Subsequently, disgraced businessman Owen Oyston and the TGWU organised a rescue package to sustain it through the 1987 general election. This avoided *it* becoming a story, with other newspapers identifying its failure in order to attack Labour. (Chippindale and Horrie, *News on Sunday*: 182-3, 196).

[716] Andrews surmises from this that the advertisers determined the market the *News on Sunday* operated in, rather than the readers. Indeed, as for what readers wanted, a space for a mid-market newspaper possibly existed. (Andrews: 10-14).

[717] *Ibid.*: 226.

[718] Chippindale and Horrie do not consider advertisers' economic impact. Yet, their suggestion that an upmarket title aimed at 'caring professionals' at least seems plausible. It was reported that this was the newspaper's main readership. (Chippindale and Horrie, *News on Sunday*: 183, 226, Andrews). According to one insider, those originally involved had envisaged such a title but had been deterred by the market research that had suggested that the more upmarket Sunday sector was too crowded. (Tony Cook interview).

countries. The way that the market stood in Britain meant that the *News on Sunday*, on the basis on which it was pitched, was bound to fail.

Other factors contributed to its rapid demise, especially funding.[719] Yet, ultimately, its downfall can be ascribed to Labour administrations' failure to have intervened to ameliorate the problems of bipolarisation. Importantly, though, its failure added to the conviction that it was impossible to get Labour representation through either a Labour movement title or increasing newspaper diversity. New methods were needed to provide a Labour movement voice in the press. As we shall see, the new press and media strategy provided this alternative.

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[719] It failed to get City funding that other less left-wing titles, such as *Today* – launched around the same time – received. (Andrews, Curran and Seaton: 103, Chippindale and Horrie, *News on Sunday*: 99-121). The left backers could not afford the amount that was needed to make the title completely viable. One problem of going upmarket would have been the cost. Investigative reporting, which was originally envisaged by the title, and would almost certainly needed to have been a feature of a 'quality' left-wing title, is hugely expensive, for instance. Promotion was also under-funded. It was also decided to offer newsagents a smaller mark-up than other titles, leading to calls for a boycott by the newsagents' federation and bad feeling with those who would be selling the title. (Andrews: 19, 22-4, Chippindale and Horrie, *News on Sunday*: 156). Andrews also notes that at there was no libel cover, making individual reporters liable. This was unusual on a national title. (Andrews: 24). This would lead to a pressure against good investigative reporting. Importantly, the paper could not afford the wages of more seasoned staff. This was among the reasons that the staff was inexperienced, which clearly affected the title's quality. (Chippindale and Horrie, *News on Sunday*: 129-137). Other important factors contributed to this. A sizable number of applications from experienced journalists were simply lost before the selection process. (Interview with Tim Gopsill and Granville Williams, March 24 2002). Some of the journalist staff appointed were not up to the task at hand. One example of this was said to be the news editor. (Tony Cook interview, interview with Tim Gopsill and Granville Williams, March 24 2002).

Maxwell, Kinnock and journalistic autonomy

An early indication of this renewed emphasis on representation came with Robert Maxwell's takeover of the Mirror newspapers. The influence of Maxwell on Labour Party policy has been a matter of controversy. Some of the biographers closest to him have regarded his effect on the party as negligible. Maxwell's former editor Roy Greenslade is typical. Greenslade distanced the Labour leadership from Maxwell in his biography written after the publisher's apparent suicide. Generally, Greenslade makes Maxwell out to be a Walter Mitty figure – a posturing buffoon. He disputes claims that the former Labour MP was a party paymaster; a prestigious figure; or a backroom wielder of influence.[720] Implicitly questioning this, the socialist writer Freedman argues that Maxwell was notable among media owners in his influence on the Labour leadership. But, as his is a study of television policies, he provides little supporting evidence regarding this.[721] So, which argument can be supported?

Well, to some extent, both. There is evidence to suggest that Maxwell was a ridiculous figure who was personally disliked. James Thomas has shown that Maxwell had misplaced illusions over his influence over the Mirror.[722] Yet, there is some evidence to suggest that in the process of getting hold of the newspaper group, his *very existence* forced Kinnock to change commitments to journalistic autonomy from proprietor control that the leader had held – in order to gain Labour representation.

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[720] Indeed, Greenslade notes that the personal relations between Maxwell and the Kinnocks were not warm. His relationship with Neil Kinnock was one of '...polite cordiality in public...', which Kinnock's wife Glenys found hard to maintain. She detested the Maxwell 'monster'. Also, having Joe Haines as Maxwell's political advisor did not help relations, as Haines' role as press secretary to the out-of-favour former Labour leader, Harold Wilson, meant he was not regarded well in Kinnock circles. (Greenslade, Roy. 1992. *Maxwell's fall : the appalling legacy of a corrupt man.* London: Simon & Schuster., 186-187).

[721] Freedman, 2000: 271.

[722] Thomas, James. 2000. "The 'Max Factor' - a Mirror Image? Robert Maxwell and the *Daily Mirror* Tradition." in *Northcliffe's legacy : aspects of the British popular press, 1896-1996*, edited by Colin Seymour-Ure, Peter Catterall, Adrian Smith, and History Institute of Contemporary British. Basingstoke: Macmillan in association with Institute of Contemporary British History.: 201-226.

Evidence suggests Maxwell's pressure on Kinnock meant that the Labour leader was prepared to consciously revise his own position after initially demanding that no single proprietor could own the *Daily Mirror*. Why was this important? Nothing that was written in Chapter 1 concerning the relationship between ownership and control denied the potential that editors, and even senior journalists, could maintain a level of autonomy from majority shareholder control. In the case of the *Daily Mirror*, for fifty years before the Maxwell takeover, there had been no single proprietor. In 1931, Lord Rothermere traded his shares in the *Daily Mirror* to individual shareholders.[723] Rothermere's nephew, Cecil King, later operated as an old-style press baron. Yet his ignorance of the fact that he was not the owner but the chairman of the International Publishing Company (IPC) helped lead to his famous downfall.[724] In 1970, IPC merged with Reed to form Reed International.[725] Tony Miles moved from being the *Daily Mirror*'s editor to become editorial director and later also became Mirror Group chairman.[726]

Importantly, there was a level of autonomy from Reed and the chairman did not solely make policy decisions.[727] Instead, a five-person team including senior journalists, Miles and the editor Mike Molloy decided political policy.[728] The editor's job was "...more of a consensus position than an arbitrary dictatorship..." where the paper's political stance

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[723] Edelman, Maurice, and Publications Periodical. 1966. *The 'Mirror': a political history*. London: Hamish Hamilton.: 20, Curran and Seaton: 56.

[724] He penned an editorial calling for Harold Wilson's resignation. Yet, King's weakness was that, again, he was not the owner, but the chairman, responsible to directors, who sacked him. (Hanlin: 38-9, Brendon, Piers. 1982. *The life and death of the press barons*. London: Secker & Warburg.: 205, 206, 221, Edelman: 100-106, 115).

[725] Graham Murdock and Peter Golding, 'The structure, ownership and control of the press 1914-76' in Boyce, D. G., James Curran, Pauline Wingate, and Group Acton Society Press. 1978. *Newspaper history from the seventeenth century to the present day*. London: Constable etc. for the Press Group of the Acton Society.: 138.

[726] Author interview with Geoffrey Goodman, January 2 2003, Stott, Richard. 2002. *Dogs and lamposts : secrets behind the headlines from Fleet Street's number one editor*. London: Metro.: 130-1, 186.

[727] The Mirror Group told the Royal Commission on the Press in 1975: "There was a time when the Group's central policy was imposed by the Chairman. This is no longer the case. The Chairman behaves towards editors like a constitutional monarch. He may encourage and warn." (Answers to questions on the points raised by the Royal Commission on the Press, Mirror Group Newspapers Ltd., August 1975: 5).

[728] "There was the assembly of the five of us. This was engrained in the character of the paper."(Author interview with Geoffrey Goodman, January 2 2003).

came "...more from editorial consensus than any single person's directive," as the Royal Commission on the Press was told in 1975.[729]

This was very far from journalistic control or democratic control. Yet, it was a degree of autonomy, which went beyond being held by a single editor into some collectivity. As one of the five, industrial editor Geoffrey Goodman told the author: "It was a more democratic situation, which led to informed discussion and debate."[730] The Marxist *Daily Mirror* columnist Paul Foot agrees with the assessment that there was a measure of journalistic autonomy at this time. It was believed that not having a single proprietor would protect this.[731]

The circumstances surrounding the Labour Party's involvement in the takeover of MGN are generally well known. According to Tom Bower, Maxwell's most famous biographer, the former MP had seduced the Labour leadership in July 1984.[732] To assess this further, however, we need to start nine months earlier. Reed International announced in October 1983 that it wished to float independently the company that possessed the *Daily Mirror*, around the time Kinnock became leader. Reed originally accepted refusing to sell to a single owner and affirmed that the paper would stay Labour-supporting. As Bower suggests, it was crucial for Maxwell to get the Labour leader's support if Reed was to break the first part of this pledge.[733]

Within weeks of his election, Kinnock had secret discussions with the title's then editor Mike Molloy. The outcome was that the contents of a then confidential letter were approved. This, it was agreed, would only appear in the *Daily Mirror* at the time when the new chairman of MGN was known. It appears to have never been published anywhere. The letter was much more hard-hitting than what was eventually Kinnock's

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[729] Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Press submitted by Mirror Group Newspapers Ltd., April 1975, (1) 8, (1) 9.
[730] Author interviews with Geoffrey Goodman, August 1 2001 and January 2 2003.
[731] "Miles was a very good chairman. I liked him. He was journalist friendly.... The argument was that if there was a single buyer it would be damaging to the freedom of the press." (Author interview with Paul Foot, January 6 2003).
[732] Bower, Tom. 1996. *Maxwell : the final verdict*. London: HarperCollins.: 371-2.
[733] Bower, Tom. 1988. *Maxwell : the outsider*. London: Aurum.: 288.

public position. It underlined his original determination to preserve both journalistic autonomy within the *Daily Mirror* and his concerns about business diversification into newspaper ownership.[734]

In this remarkable letter, Kinnock wrote of his "...concern over the proposed sale". He feared the sale would lead to one single owner with other business interests taking over control – just the sort of figure Maxwell was. He noted that: "Without a free and fearless press, there can be no true democracy. But a free press is no abstract idea. It means freedom, every day, from an owner's interference." In heated tones, he announced: "It would be an outrage if the proposed sale left the Mirror open – if not today, then in future years – to a takeover by those who would curb your independence and try to make you obedient to the discipline of some big business vested interest."[735]

This was not one-off gesture by Kinnock, who had strongly expressed his concerns to others that he was unhappy about a Maxwell buyout.[736] In the interim, negotiations had taken place about securing the papers as a trust with union backing, organised by Clive Thornton, who Reed had originally appointed to oversee the sale. However, Reed scuppered these talks.[737] At another meeting arranged in July 1984, after Maxwell made approaches to buy, Kinnock's private papers indicate he again committed the party to blocking any single proprietor. This was what Maxwell was pushing for.

Kinnock told the *Mirror*'s editor Mike Molloy and chairman Miles that he was committed to opposing having a single owner as the best way of safeguarding the paper's independence. By now, however, he had not closed the door to accepting Maxwell as one among a number of shareholders. But this was a position Maxwell was unlikely to

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[734] Patricia Hewitt, *Letter to Neil Kinnock*, October 17 1983, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives.
[735] Neil Kinnock, letter to the editor of the *Daily Mirror*, October 17 1983, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives.
[736] Personal information. Geoffrey Goodman also told the author: "Kinnock was very sceptical. He questioned having Maxwell." (Author interview with Geoffrey Goodman, January 2 2003).
[737] Author interview with Geoffrey Goodman, January 2 2003, Bower, *Final verdict*: 364. "Those committed to a diverse media were very horrified; there was a concern that Thornton wasn't given a chance. There was all this string-pulling by Maxwell." (Author interview with Mike Power, then of the CPBF, now TUC campaigns officer, January 6 2003).

accept.[738] As Goodman, who worked under Maxwell, suggested, the businessman wanted to take over as a single proprietor, not one of a number of shareholders: "It was all or nothing."[739] Miles told Kinnock: "We couldn't ask for more, that would be fine...Maxwell will be entirely unpredictable."[740]

Backbench Labour MPs also shared these fears about *Mirror* journalists losing their autonomy in the event of one person purchasing the paper. One thrusting, newly-elected, MP put it thus: "...[O]ne must be concerned when newspapers are to be owned by an individual who gives unenforceable guarantees of independence."[741] That MP was the future Labour leader Tony Blair, who would later deal with proprietors while ignoring calls for journalist autonomy legislation.

Nevertheless, this call for autonomy and independence appeared to dovetail with the narrower demand that the *Daily Mirror* remain a party-supporting paper. Kinnock's original letter had a subtext, which reflected the tension of ownership with Labour representation. Kinnock stated that one aspect of independence that should be protected was freedom "...from slavish devotion to a party line...".[742] Yet, "...independence from big business..." could well also be taken as code for traditional Labour Party concerns about the pro-Tory bias of the national press. In other words, it should stick to its stance as a pro-Labour paper, as Reed had pledged.[743] This also reflected concerns of the editorial and senior pro-Labour *Mirror* people.[744]

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[738] According to notes made by Kinnock's press secretary, Patricia Hewitt, he told the *Mirror* men: "'We want to see a diverse ownership. That's the best way of safeguarding your independence.' The *Mirror* duo were pleased with this seemingly unambiguous assurance." (Patricia Hewitt , *Notes of meeting between Neil Kinnock and Tony Miles and Mike Molloy*, July 5 1984, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives). Patricia Hewitt was Kinnock's press secretary and then policy coordinator for the leader's office. She became Trade and Industry Minister in the Blair government. (2002. *Who's who 2002 : an annual biographical dictionary*. London: A. & C. Black, 2002., 988).

[739] Author interview with Geoffrey Goodman, January 2 2003.

[740] Patricia Hewitt , *Notes of meeting between Neil Kinnock and Tony Miles and Mike Molloy*, July 5 1984, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives.

[741] HOC July 13 1984, col. 1468.

[742] Neil Kinnock, *Letter to the editor of the Daily Mirror*, October 17 1983, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives.

[743] Bower, *Outsider*: 281.

[744] At the later secret meeting, the *Mirror* men outlined their fears that support for Labour would wane if Maxwell took charge. Maxwell had recently praised Thatcher and they feared that, with his arrival, the Labour-supporting policy-making team, would exit. Mike Molloy told Kinnock: "We won't turn

At the same time as this, Maxwell was mounting a counter-operation to persuade Kinnock. A trump card was his historical commitment, as a former Labour MP, to the party – this question of Labour representation. The former Labour leader Foot was one go-between. Foot later said that a motivation was that Maxwell "...promised that the papers would continue to support the party." Fearing that in other hands the paper's support for Labour would wither, Foot backed Maxwell.[745] Maxwell also enlisted the support of Roy Hattersley, now Labour's deputy leader.[746]

Yet, it is now clear that Maxwell also engaged in secret negotiations with Kinnock. Maxwell played on fears that Labour support would wither without him; assuring him that the paper would carry on supporting Labour. They spoke on the phone and, on July 9 1984, Maxwell wrote a private letter telling Kinnock that if he did not have the leader's backing, the papers' ownership could be "...either wholly dispersed among City institutions or invested in some predator whose political sympathies are elsewhere".[747]

Kinnock now had an unenviable choice. He could maintain Labour's support in Fleet Street, albeit on Maxwell's terms as a single owner. Or he could provide some partial protection for the limited autonomy of the Labour-supporting senior journalists by supporting the Mirror journalists' representatives' opposition to the buyout. The requirement for Labour representation meant that despite his deep unease, he chose the former option.[748]

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somersaults. Maxwell could tell me to write an article saying Mrs Thatcher is the best Prime Minister. I won't do that." (Patricia Hewitt , 'Notes of meeting between Neil Kinnock and Tony Miles and Mike Molloy', July 5 1984, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives). As it happened, the fears of a Thatcherite agenda being imposed were largely unfounded. (Thomas, The 'Max Factor': 213-4).

[745] Quoted in Bower, *Final Verdict*: 372. Foot also had discussions with Hattersley, Molloy and Geoffrey Goodman. (Geoffrey Goodman, private correspondence with the author, September 28 2002).

[746] Bower, *Final Verdict*: 371-2, *Free Press 26*, November/December 1984, Greenslade, *Maxwell*: 63.

[747] Robert Maxwell, letter to Kinnock, July 9, 1984. Kinnock's personal papers also reveal handwritten notes by Kinnock, possibly of a meeting with Maxwell, where it is written: "If you turn against me it will be widely interp. (interpreted?) in the country as an opp'y (opportunity?) missed." It was indicated that Maxwell was a party member, unlike the other "...proprietors – all Tories". (Handwritten note, no date, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives).

[748] Paul Foot put it: "The instinct would be that Kinnock would have sold out...and be first to go along with Maxwell. But he didn't. Then he was in a difficult position." (Author interview with Paul Foot, January 6 2003).

Instead of intervening to stop the newspaper becoming a one-man band, he adopted a hands-off approach. He abandoned a press release implicitly critical of Maxwell.[749] When Maxwell took over, Kinnock's response was measured. On Friday the 13th of July, with some understatement, Kinnock noted: "The history of single-proprietor ownership of newspapers in Britain is not a happy one. Mr Maxwell could be the exception to the rule. Many people will join me in hoping that he will be."[750] Maxwell had offered a guarantee that he would not interfere in the editorial judgement of the newspaper.[751] Yet, he ignored this commitment subsequently.[752]

The shift in Kinnock's stance was clear. The existence of the millionaire businessman and the pressure of *realpolitik* had dictated the Labour leadership's policy, and had overridden Kinnock's principles on journalist autonomy. Labour representation was key. As Philip Graf, the retiring Chief Executive of Trinity Mirror, owners of the *Daily Mirror*, put it more recently: "...Maxwell would not have been a good enemy for the Labour leader to have made".[753] In 1989, facing a Labour conference motion supporting the 'Pergamon 23', workers Maxwell had sacked who had engaged in a legal one-day strike, Labour's general secretary Larry Whitty pleaded unsuccessfully for remittal. He implored reluctant delegates to recognise that Maxwell "...controlled a newspaper whose support the Labour Party is often grateful for...".[754] As Whitty suggested and Hattersley

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[749] Neil Kinnock's Office, *Press Release*, July 9 1984, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives.
[750] Neil Kinnock's Office, *Press Release*, July 13 1984, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives.
[751] Bower, Tom. 1991. *Maxwell : the outsider*. London: Mandarin.: 382, Thomas, The 'Max Factor': 201.
[752] How much effect this interference had is a subject of debate. As indicated, James Thomas suggests that Maxwell's political influence on the *Daily Mirror* was limited. (Thomas, The 'Max Factor': 201-226). Nevertheless, insider accounts indicate his interference was real enough. Greenslade identifies that leaders were even written in the paper without his knowledge as editor. And *Mirror* journalists Geoffrey Goodman and Paul Foot have both written of Maxwell's editorial interference. Greenslade has described Maxwell as "...the world's most intrusive proprietor" who "...attempted to play engine driver, signalman and stationmaster". (Greenslade, Roy. 2002. 'Sorry Arthur', *The Guardian*, May 27, 2002, Greenslade, *Press Gang*: 512). See also Greenslade, *Maxwell* and Foot, Paul. 2000. *Articles of resistance*. London: Bookmarks, 2000., 222-3, Goodman, Geoffrey. 2000. 'Pimps or Pimpernels'. *British Journalism Review* 11:3-6.
[753] Graf, Philip. 2001. *The Government And The Press: An Uneasy Relationship*, Annual Livery Lecture, The Society of Editors, 3 April 2001.
[754] Labour Party, Conference (Ed.). 1991. *Report of the annual conference of the Labour Party*. London: Labour Party.: 91-2.

wrote after Maxwell's death, to not have the *Daily Mirror*'s support for Labour would be a "...an intolerable psychological handicap".[755]

The need to maintain a foothold in Fleet Street – ensuring that Labour was represented – meant that commitments were sacrificed. Moreover, the power of ownership in a market economy meant that even the Labour leader had limited choice over the manner of that representation. Returning to a point considered in Chapter 1, there was no democratic control over that representation. Paul Foot describes Kinnock's dilemma well: "There is no democratic process... The only newspaper that supports Labour is sold on the marketplace and he is stuck."[756]

The 1987 election, Wapping, Nationalism and Labour representation

There were other indications that the Labour leadership was starting to shift its policy on the media and press ownership, some previously little discussed.

The Labour leadership dismissed the party's Arts and Media spokesman, Norman Buchan, at the start of the 1987 election year, indicating its minimal commitment to implement party policy. Buchan was a Kinnock ally, who, like his leader, had abstained in the Benn/Healey deputy leadership contest. He had been keen on media reform and had personally strongly opposed press ownership concentration.[757] The reasons he was dismissed mostly related to broadcasting, but press policy was implicated. Buchan had called for a centralised arts and media ministry that included broadcasting in its remit, citing previous party policy. However, Kinnock rejected this. He sacked Buchan, when he opposed Kinnock's course, to be replaced by Mark Fisher.[758]

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[755] Hattersley, Roy. 1991. 'Reflections on the Mirror', *Financial Times*, November 16 1991.
[756] Author interview with Paul Foot, January 6 2003.
[757] Heffernan and Marqusee: 123, Tricia Sumner interview, February 6 2002. Frank Allaun 'A true fighter for press freedom', *Free Press*, November/December 1990. Former teacher Norman Buchan was a former Communist Party member who had left after opposing the Hungarian invasion in 1957. He had been Under-secretary in the Scottish Office and then Minister of State for Agriculture. After 1979, he became Shadow Minister for the Arts. (1990. *Dod's parliamentary companion.*: 406, Allaun, Frank. 1990. 'A true fighter for press freedom', *Free Press*, November/December 1990).
[758] Benn, *The end of an era*: 488-90, Freedman, 2000: 204, Freedman, 2003: 140-1, Heffernan and Marqusee: 123-4. In Benn's words, the leader "...had consulted everyone from Bragg to Bragg (Melvyn

As, Freedman says, this was a seemingly secondary issue, yet it indicated divisions in the party over media policy.[759] Others have seen it as indicating 'Kinnock's weakness' or his reluctance to challenge the media 'powers that be'.[760] The left's determination to coordinate all media policy in one ministry may be explained by an earlier debate. Press reform proponents, notably Michael Meacher, feared that without this unitary approach any attempts at change could 'fall through the cracks' between ministries, if political will was lacking. Whether this was a key reason why reform had not happened is not at issue. It was seen as a way of turning party policy into reality.[761]

However, a more substantial shift had happened to press policy by the time of the 1987 election, which is little discussed in the literature that touches on the subject.[762] If successful in its aims, it would have targeted the largest selling daily tabloid – the *Sun*. Labour needed to neutralise this title's hostile coverage to aid its press representation. In this sense, the adopted policy can be seen as another attempt to increase Labour representation, albeit a probably ineffective one based on an error in policy transfer. Yet, the process of adopting it also indicated that the pressures to increase Labour representation were positively hindering demands for press diversity and participative

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and Billy)", before opposing integrating broadcasting policy into the new joint ministry. (Benn, *The end of an era*: 488). Mark Fisher was a documentary film producer and writer before becoming the Principal of Tattenhall Centre of Education. He became an MP in 1983 and was Arts and Media spokesperson from 1987 to 1992. He was Labour spokesman on National Heritage from 1993 to 1997. He was a minister for National Heritage and in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport until 1998. (2002. *Who's who 2002 : an annual biographical dictionary*. London: A. & C. Black.: 712-3, 2000. *Dod's parliamentary companion 2001 : 168th year*. London: Vacher Dod.: 153).

[759] Freedman, 2000: 204, Freedman, 2003: 140.

[760] Tricia Sumner interview with author, February 6 2002. Heffernan and Marqusee: 123-4.

[761] As Sumner notes, having a single ministry would give press and media policy prominence. It would not be placed under other Home Office areas of responsibility, such as police and prisons, for instance. She adds: "That unified aspect was very important. The unions were very interested in that as well." Also, as Allaun indicated, Kinnock's policy meant that the media minister would be subordinate to the Home Secretary. (Tricia Sumner interview with author, February 6 2002, Allaun, Frank. 1990. 'A true fighter for press freedom', *Free Press*, November/December 1990). Nevertheless, an indication that the matter was not resolved by Kinnock's intervention was that Labour went into the 1987 and 1992 elections still committed to creating a unified ministry of the media and arts. (Labour Party, *Britain will win*, Dale: 308).

[762] For instance, the shift is not noted in the key work dealing with Labour Party press reform, that of Allaun. He sees little work specifically done on newspaper ownership in the time between the 1983 and 1987 elections. (Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 91). One exception that mentions it is in MacShane, Media Policy, in Seaton and Pimlott: 215-235.

democracy. The change also indicated that part of the effect of the Wapping printers' defeat was that radical policies on diversity had retreated into populist rhetoric.

The circumstances surrounding the Wapping dispute are well known. News International sacked around 5,000 printers when it moved to Wapping, prompting a bitter dispute. What is less acknowledged is the effect the dispute had on Labour's plans for diversifying the press. Labour's 1987 election manifesto saw a significant shift in press policy. *Britain Will Win*, with the leadership's blessing, called for a bar on foreign citizens and companies from owning UK newspapers.[763] Its main target was seen to be Maxwell's tabloid rival, Murdoch, and the News International's papers, which were such bitter Labour critics. As such, the print union leadership, under pressure over Wapping, pressed for the move.

Kinnock had showed his sympathy for the foreigner bar in a rare foray into public discussion on press ownership policy. This happened at a 1986 rally to support those who News International had sacked. He gave public support to challenging the press owners, along the lines of a *radical* reading of the 1983 manifesto. His was a bold policy restatement by a Labour leader responding to the pressure developed during the dispute. However, all this belied his nationalistic message.[764] He wanted foreigners excluded from owning the British press. This new nationalist demand not only substituted pressure for

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[763] Labour Party, *Britain will win*: 14. That this has been missed by commentators and even by activists at the time seems surprising and indicates that little was made of this pledge.

[764] In his speech, he accused Murdoch of being an autocratic threat to democracy, who, with two other owners, presided over "...one of the greatest concentrations of power in newspaper ownership anywhere in the world". He noted that, despite this concentration, "...we have one of the weakest systems of controlling it." To beef up the system, Kinnock indicated that it would be 'naïve' to believe that curbing monopolies was enough. As if he was reading a page from James Curran's critique of the proposals of Labour's 1983 manifesto, he announced that curbs on their own "...would simply encourage the dominant groups to unload their weak and loss-making titles". This would merely 'diminish' variety. Nevertheless, Kinnock's answer to this problem, unlike that provided by those such as Curran, was to go no further than the manifesto had done. He recognised that what was needed was to create a climate for diversity. To achieve this, the Labour Party was committed to "...assisting the publication and distribution of new publications". (Neil Kinnock, speech to the Wapping Rally at Wembley, no date, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives).

diversity with calls to a mild xenophobia, the new stand was based on a policy transfer developed from a factual error made at the highest level in the party.[765]

The print unions championed this new approach. They had been involved in bitter disputes with an Australian and, before that, the Asian Eddy Shah at the *Stockport Messenger*. In this situation, it would not be too surprising to suggest that this had stoked up nationalist prejudice in some members, which the unions expressed.[766] This nationalist theme came to the fore when the unions succeeded in getting the 1986 TUC conference to demand that a Labour government ensure that press "...ownership and executive control is retained in this country".[767]

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[765] Kinnock thought that it was a United States law prohibiting *press* ownership by foreign nationals that had forced Murdoch to take up US citizenship. He wanted a policy transfer so that such a law as he imagined operated there could be implemented in Britain. In fact, Kinnock simply had got it wrong. The law in the US that forced Murdoch to become an American citizen controls *broadcasting*. Like the British law on terrestrial broadcasting, which New Labour looked set to modify in 2002, ownership was only available to EU citizens, so only US nationals can be applicants and officers of stations with a broadcast licence. Rupert Murdoch had been operating in the US newspaper market from the 1970s. He bought the *New York Post* in 1976. He only became a US citizen in 1985. (Neil Kinnock, speech to the Wapping Rally at Wembley, no date, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives, Compaine Benjamin, M. 1982. *Who owns the media? : concentration of ownership in the mass communications industry*. White Plains, N.Y.: Knowledge Industry Publications.: 56, 312, Shawcross, William. 1997. *Murdoch : the making of a media empire*. New York: Simon & Schuster.: 92-4, 212-5, Strossen, Nadine. 1993. 'Press Law in the United States' in *Press law and practice : a comparative study of press freedom in European and other democracies : an Article 19 Report*, edited by Sandra Coliver and Article. London: Published by Article 19 for the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization.: 197, 639).

[766] A particular indication of this was that the NGA insisted on not using the Anglicised first name that Shah preferred, but emphasised his foreigner status by insisting on describing him by his original name Selim Jehan Shah. (See for instance, NGA (82). 1983. 'Second Briefing Conference for MPs background notes', November 1983). Also, both Andrew Neil and Brian MacArthur recall one member of a NGA delegation saying: "His real name is Selim Jehan Shah. Why didn't you call him that?" (MacArthur, Brian. 1988. *Eddy Shah : Today and the newspaper revolution*. Newton Abbot ; North Pomfret, Vt.: David & Charles.: 31, Neil: 94). No such problems existed for the East European *white* entrepreneur Hoch, who, like Shah, had an anglicised name. But this name was one the unions were used to describing him by – Bob Maxwell.

[767] Trades Union Congress. Annual, Conference. 1986. *Report of the 118th annual Trades Union Congress*. London: T.U.C.: 636. SOGAT's Brenda Dean did not complain that national newspaper ownership was in *few* hands but that they were in *foreign* hands. She noted that 70% of the market was owned by people who were not British citizens or by firms that were not British. The only response to the idea that such a motion was racist and would even affect black newspapers was that this was not the motion's intention. The printing unions resented any claims of having a "racist intent". Dean also compounded the error made by Kinnock by claiming that a citizenship requirement operated in Scandinavia, as well as America. (TUC 1983: 637-8). In effect, like Kinnock, she was calling for a policy transfer. In fact, Norway and Sweden have no such citizen restriction. (Steingrim Wolland, 'Press Law in Norway' and Hans-Gunnar Azberger 'Freedom of the Press in Sweden' in Coliver, Sandra, and Article. 1993. *Press law and practice : a comparative study of press freedom in European and other democracies : an Article 19 Report*. London: Published by Article 19 for the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization.:119, 153). Of those countries that do have restrictions on foreign ownership of the press – as opposed to broadcasting

It was argued that such a law would increase newspaper accountability. Instead, it reduced the question of concentration and press participative democracy to the demonisation of a single owner – Murdoch. The proprietor had stripped the printers of their jobs. This appeared an attractive way of excluding him in a relatively painless way. Yet, disguised nationalism substituted itself for democratic accountability. It was left to the NUJ at the TUC congress to oppose the attempt to "...blame ...the foreigner..." as "...solving nothing". The union's Jake Ecclestone advocated the alternative of compulsory divestment. But delegates ignored his call to reject "...superficially attractive solutions...".[768]

When that year's Labour Party conference debated the new departure, it faced no vocal opposition. The NEC-backed motion called for a bar on ownership by non-UK companies or individuals. Speakers used delegates' anger at the Wapping printworkers' treatment to again voice a nationalist sentiment.[769] The problem with the national press was clear, as the seconder Danny Sergeant, of SOGAT, indicated: "It is not British. It is foreign."[770] This time no NUJ speaker indicated that this cut across existing press policy, as the union was not Labour-affiliated. Yet, two indications of this divergence were that

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– Australia, Canada, France and Spain, in three the strictures have rarely stopped foreigners from acquiring shares. It is only in France that a 1986 law specified that foreigners were not allowed to own more than 20% of a press firm. (Sandra Coliver 'Comparative Analysis of Press Law in European and Other Democracies' and Roger Errera, 'Press Law in France' in Coliver: 260, 61).

[768] He considered that those such as Murdoch would "...change their nationalities as easily as they change their suits". (TUC, *Conference 1986*: 639. See also Anon.1986. 'What the TUC decided in Brighton', *Tribune*, September 12 1986).

[769] SOGAT's original motion, which became part of the composite, did not even discuss companies, but openly opposed foreign individuals owning the British press. The motion's proposer, the NGA's Arthur Bonneger, declared it was crucial to maintain the "...power of the British media in the hands of our people." (Labour Party, Conference (Ed.). 1986a. *Agenda for the annual conference of the Labour Party*. London: Labour Party.: 70).

[770] There was a confused interweaving with concerns about multinational corporations. Thus, for the NEC, the NGA's Gordon Colling told the conference that press ownership: "...has an international capitalist influence which we wish to ameliorate". However, the answer to this was to target nationality, not the 'capitalist influence'. (Labour Party, Conference (Ed.). 1986b. *Report of the annual conference of the Labour Party*. London: Labour Party.: 118).

the CPBF opposed the new stance and a constituency 'workers' control' motion was not composited in with the agreed position.[771]

Most importantly, this new position made it into the 1987 manifesto. It was made clear to the shadow ministerial team, Mark Fisher and Robin Corbett, who were being advised by Curran and the CPBF's Mike Jempson, that this was being supported – and that it would "...catch Murdoch now".[772] The shadow minister, now Lord Corbett, told the author that the unions strongly influenced this policy, which he disagreed with.[773] However, it had leadership approval at this stage and the manifesto announced press control, like that of broadcasting, was "...to be retained by citizens of Britain".[774] Note that Labour did not target the companies' multinational nature, but the owners' nationality.

How does this shift relate to questions of ownership diversity and democratic ownership? There is clearly a question regarding multinational control of the press, leading to a diversity deficit internationally. Some posed Labour's response in this way.[775] Newspapers' specific local flavour could be lost. Also, this work does not consider

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[771] The motion wanted to limit ownership by firms to one national title and wished to lodge the subsequently divested titles in the hands of the workers in the industry. (Labour Party, *Agenda 1986*: 70, CPBF veteran and *Free Press* editor Granville Williams, interview with author, June 14 2002).

[772] "I have never forgotten Austin Mitchell...wandering into the room when we were discussing the whole ownership issue and he just sort of said: 'Oh let's just slap on that no foreigners can own media here.' I was saying that: 'This is going to catch minority publications, it's xenophobic.' He said: 'It doesn't matter, it will be popular and we will catch Murdoch now.'...What worried me [was] it was so sort of simplistic and populist. We were all gobsmacked that...the complexities of the issue were just thrown out of the window to put in something like that... Because I mean that clearly to say: 'No foreigners' is crude... It is not a very clever way to proceed." (Mike Jempson, interview with author, September 3 2002). Mitchell was to soon change his attitude to Murdoch.

[773] According to Lord Corbett: "Wapping, in a sense, hardened attitudes." He said the view of the unions influenced some in the party with the view that: "'What this party ought to be about is 'sticking one up Murdoch' – a perfectly understandable, but not a wholly credible, policy...". (Lord Corbett, interview with author, October 10 2002).

[774] Labour Party, *Britain will win*: 14. The 1988 party conference reiterated the commitment. (Labour Party, Conference (Ed.). 1988. *Report of the annual conference of the Labour Party*. London: Labour Party.: 176).

[775] For example, Gordon Colling, of the NGA, at the 1986 party conference . (Labour Party, *Report 1986*: 118). Tricia Sumner put this view to the author. (Tricia Sumner, interview with author, February 6 2002). See also Littleton Suellen, M. 1992. *The Wapping dispute : an examination of the conflict and its impact on the national newspaper industry*. Aldershot ; Brookfield, USA: Avebury.: 193. There may well also be an argument for barring transnational conglomerates from owning the regional and local press.

broadcasting, but it is often argued that to protect cultures against the threat of American hegemony there would be a need for restrictions to protect national identity.[776]

However, these arguments do not apply *so readily* to national press news. The nature of national newspapers mean that, while there may be a pressure to Hollywood hegemony when considering the increasing role of 'celebrity news', what is regarded as 'newsworthy' tends to accentuate the national over the international. Thus, we can see that some of the papers that the print unions were most angry about, the *Sun* and the *News of the World* have been those with the least foreign coverage. In fact, it could be argued that it is those titles' (albeit-inaccurately) perceived 'Britishness', which adds to their success.

Nevertheless, to argue that this would be answered by the nationality bar proposed was to conflate the question of foreign *owners* with that of foreign *ownership*. One newspaper commentator close to the party also exhibited this tendency.[777] It is difficult to see, generally, how diversity and democratic participation and ownership would be advanced by the restriction of ownership by nationality.

Neither, incidentally, would it necessarily have been effective in excluding its most obvious target. Keeping it in the family could well mean that different members of the Murdoch clan could have citizenship in different countries, with effective control remaining with the same man. So, the policy was nationalistic and potentially ineffective even in the narrow aims it set itself. Instead, it had as an inspiration the hatred of an individual – Murdoch. He became one of Labour's most hated figures over the next few years.[778] Yet, while concentrating on one individual, the issue of the *structure* of press ownership and measures to be taken was progressively less discussed.

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[776] Sumner interview, Littleton Suellen, M. 1992. *The Wapping dispute : an examination of the conflict and its impact on the national newspaper industry.* Aldershot ; Brookfield, USA: Avebury.: 193. This was an argument activists made after New Labour signalled their intention to relax the laws on foreign ownership in 2002. See, for instance, Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. 2002. 'The Communications Bill: some key areas of concern and suggested amendments', CPBF, 2 December 2002.
[777] Tom Baistow, 'The Predator's Press' in Buchan, Norman, and Tricia Sumner. 1989. *Glasnost in Britain? : against censorship and in defence of the word.* London: Macmillan.: 55.
[778] Freedman, 2000: 207.

The other measures in the 1987 election manifesto reflected the more general policy shift. AES-style interventionism had receded in press ownership policy. As Curran and Seaton indicate, the manifesto reworked some of the themes regarding concentration's effect on press plurality. It is true that, in a limited sense, the 1970s' radicalism still influenced *Britain Will Win With Labour.*[779] But, its commitment to diversity was more vague and to democratisation and access non-existent. Under the contending pressures that we looked at earlier, the commitments made at the 1983 Labour conference did not find their way into the manifesto. This is despite the fact that no party body had formally jettisoned them. Instead, apart from the important new nationalist policy, the manifesto pledged a Labour government to enacting unspecified laws to "...place limits on the concentration of ownership".[780] As Allaun notes, it possessed even briefer commitments than the 1983 document and was "...composed of generalities".[781]

Cross-ownership

Another indication of the potential tension between Labour representation and diversity came as Labour policy turned its attention to the important development of diagonal cross-media concentration. Concern partly reflected the interest in providing for Labour representation, while opposition within Labour's ranks to the path taken prefigured what would become Labour's policy.

Cross-media conglomeration was a very significant development in the 1980s – on both sides of the Atlantic.[782] The Labour Party's interest in this had been spurred by new developments. Technological innovation had increased as the Conservative government had relaxed cross-ownership rules. This saw News Corporation develop a cross-sectoral powerhouse; dominating the satellite sector and leading the national newspaper market.

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[779] Seaton and Pimlott: 300.
[780] Labour Party, *Britain will win.*
[781] Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 91.
[782] Writers such as Ben Badjikian, Robert McChesney, Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky have chronicled how the most powerful media market in the world, the United States, saw huge cross-sectoral media concentration develop in the 1980s. (Bagdikian, McChesney, *Rich media*, Herman and Chomsky).

In tandem, in contrast to the earlier period we are considering, the Labour Party now concentrated more on broadcasting policy.[783]

Interest was also linked to the Wapping dispute's nationalist policy response, however, the individual targeting of Murdoch and Labour representation. One needs to be careful about this. For some in the Labour Party, Murdoch represented a totem of the problems of press and cross-media concentration. Yet, he was also regarded by some as an 'old-style' right-wing interventionist proprietor, in league with the Conservative Party, mutually advancing each other's interests. To oppose him would be to advance Labour representation. In retrospect, we can see that Murdoch's personal vilification as a pivotal point in Labour's policy evolution. The Labour leadership was moving from concentrating on policy targets to intervene to deal with concentration, through the individual targeting of Murdoch, towards later diluting diversification policies, while other methods to increase Labour representation took precedence.

Labour concerns were heightened by Sky Television's launch and its takeover of a rival to form BSkyB, with Conservative government approval. In February 1989, Sky Television was launched amid a welter of positive publicity from the *Sun* and other News International titles, heightening concerns about cross-promotion.[784] The Conservative government had stated its opposition to cross-ownership. And it had formalised an IBA policy of reducing press interests in broadcasting in the 1990 Broadcasting Act. The Government position was that no newspaper owner could possess more than 20% of a terrestrial television station.[785] Yet, this was ignored when it came to non-British satellite channels, freeing News International to carry on with its satellite and newspaper interests.[786]

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[783] Freedman, 2000, Freedman, 2003.

[784] Andrew Neil, as Sky's executive chairman at the time of the launch admits that all the titles, bar the *Sunday Times*, which he still edited and saw a conflict of interest, treated the launch with "...positive reporting". However, he states that this was a reaction to the "...mountain of scepticism and bad press..." from other parts of the media. (Neil: 374) Hardly a critic, Shawcross describes the News International titles as "...shameless cheerleaders...". (Shawcross, *Murdoch*: 302) See also Curran and Seaton: 83.

[785] House of Commons Hansard Debates for 19 May 1989, col. 630-3, House of Commons Hansard Debates for 18 December 1989, col. 42, Curran and Seaton: 295.

[786] HOC 18 December 1989, col. 43, Curran and Seaton: 295.

Bryan Gould, speaking for the frontbench, had called for stricter controls on cross media ownership in 1988 and the party publicly committed itself to this the next year. The rhetoric denouncing Murdoch was strident.[787] At first, the Shadow Cabinet argued that newspaper owners could not also own broadcasting stations – satellite or terrestrial.[788] The Government's decision to allow Sky's takeover of the only other satellite operator in 1990, creating a monopoly, prompted further Labour frontbench fears of cross-ownership domination and the attendant democratic threat.[789] Mark Fisher described it as a "...craven decision taken by a government in hock with Mr Murdoch"; an accusation which would be laid against the Labour leadership only a few years later.[790]

Yet, importantly, a tension already existed between this frontbench rhetoric and concerns from the leadership and strategists to not alienate media business. In official Policy Review documents, Labour's commitment to stifling cross-ownership was vague. It amounted to a pledge to refer the issue to a strengthened Monopoly and Mergers Commission.[791] It did not even bother to give any evidence to the Government-appointed inquiry into the allied area of media cross-promotion.[792]

By the early 1990s, pressure was mounting to shift policy away from even this minimal commitment to diversity and towards an accommodation with News Corporation. The arguments again reflected the tension between representation and diversity. They provided a precursor to later arguments in the party. The then right-wing Labour backbencher Austin Mitchell had caused a furore by accepting an offer to become a Sky presenter in 1989. In 1990, in a quasi-policy transfer, he called on Labour to follow its

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[787] Some analysis was radical. Labour MPs expressed concern that cross-ownership was part of a wider business diversification, leading to censorship of discussion regarding other firms owned by the papers' parent company. (HOC 19 May 1989, col. 597).
[788] HOC 18 December 1989, col. 53.
[789] HOC 24 April 1991, col.. 1156.
[790] Quoted in Henry, Georgina. 1990. 'Satellite merger escapes scrutiny', *Guardian*, December 19 1990.
[791] Labour Party, Conference (Ed.). 1988. *Report of the annual conference of the Labour Party*. London: Labour Party., Anon., 'Labour launches media proposal', *Free Press* 49, October 1988, Labour Party, *Meet the challenge*: 59.
[792] This was in contrast to Buchan, the TUC, SOGAT and the NUJ. (Sadler, John, Trade Great Britain Department of, and Industry. 1991. *Enquiry into standards of cross media promotion : report to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry*. London: H.M.S.O.: 24-7, 76).

Australian and New Zealand sister parties' example and work with and not against Murdoch.[793]

For Mitchell, those parties regarded promoting their own grouping as more important than challenging a media conglomerate. They had "...seen the virtues of working with someone who owns powerful communication media so that they can put over their case". In other words, in the tension between diversity and representation, the parties' short-term advance was more crucial than the media diversity goal. The name of the game was no longer attempting to restructure press ownership for Labour to get a 'fairer' hearing. If this was to happen, Labour needed to accommodate to those owners and at least ameliorate concerns over diversity and accountability. This was especially the case, as indeed Mitchell pointed out, when Labour's policy on cross-ownership was by now so framed by the consideration of "...one medium, one channel, one television system and one person...". This stood in stark contradiction to the Policy Review's pro-business spirit.[794] At this stage, the Labour leadership refuted such arguments and vendetta claims. However, its argument had become increasingly hollow and jarringly fanciful, as the methods it envisaged for achieving its vast aims were becoming progressively minimal.[795] As Mitchell put it, merely referring ownership to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission "...is the classic formula for any party that cannot decide what to do".[796]

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[793] HOC 9 May 1990, col. 241-2.

[794] He saw that the events at Wapping were "...monstrous..." but, if the Labour Party did not have policies do undo the wrongs, then just "...hitting out is irrelevant, and in a way that is damaging to the Labour Party's case. We are talking about a powerful medium of communication and we need to put over our case on all the channels that are available to us...As the principle of the Labour Party's Policy Review is, 'For heaven's sake, don't frighten anybody', why are we rushing in with such draconian penalties for one medium, one channel, one television system and one person? It does not make sense to do that." (HOC 9 May 1990, col. 241-2).

[795] Thus as late as 1990 Hattersley told the Commons: "I do not like the idea of a newspaper and its policies being owned and controlled by one man, and even less do I like the idea of several newspapers and their policies being owned and controlled by one man. My concern is for concentration in general to be reduced and, wherever possible, to be avoided." (HOC 9 May 1990, col. 237).

[796] HOC 24 April 1991, col.. 1172. Yet, this radical aim was now not allied with a relatively coherent policy framework to deal with press concentration.

The party leadership was more decisive and assertive over Labour representation. This was taking precedence, as methods for the structural change of press ownership were receding from view.

Policy retreat

Letting the Monopoly and Mergers Commission adjudicate became Labour's 1992 manifesto position, not just regarding cross-ownership, but for all press policy.

Following the election failure, in line with other policies on intervention, even the 1987 manifesto's minimal commitment to press diversity law was starting to wane. By the late 1980s, the Labour frontbench still expressed concern that the lack of press ownership diversity provided "...an increasing threat to genuine democracy...", as the deputy leader Roy Hattersley put it.[797] But there was little put forward to challenge this. As Keynesianism made an exit, the commitment to intervention to provide press diversity also started to dissolve.

The Policy Review process saw the end of rigorous state intervention. Along the way, Labour adopted a Scandinavian social market and cultural industries approach to intervention to aid diversity. However, although the cultural industries approach guided other media policies, by the review's end, the leadership expunged it from plans for newspaper diversity.[798]

The review section on the media was considered by the Democracy for the Individual and the Community committee, chaired by Hattersley, who jointly oversaw media policy as Shadow Home Secretary. He had authored *Democratic Socialist Aims and Values*, which

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[797] HOC 18 December 1989, col. 49.

[798] The analysis did survive as a general principle guiding some media policies. The report to the NEC by the Physical and Social Environment group as part of the second phase of the review in 1989 cited local authority support for 'cultural industries' as important. (Report of the PRG: Second Phase of Policy Review PD2166A April 1989: 40-41, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives). And the cultural industries analysis infused the *Design in the 90s* document which called for investment in artistic design as aid to market competitiveness. Design was a key component of the change to a post-industrial age, which those around *Marxism Today* had trumpeted, where wealth creation was claimed to be often based more on design than production investment. (Labour, Party. 1991a. *Design the nineties*. London: Labour Party.).

was an intellectually ambitious, though failed, attempt to be the Policy Review's 'ideological foundation'. His document's relatively radical aims for democratising and diversifying the press were undone by his failure to challenge market control.[799]

But this did not mean that activist and union demands had been extinguished. The 1988 conference provided the review with a policy that was more interventionist than that proposed by the leadership. The motion passed continued with the nationalistic measure of stopping ownership by foreign individuals. Yet, it also called on the review to consider the now traditional routes of an advertising levy and publicly owned printing and distribution facilities, to broaden the press.[800]

New Left elements on the review took up this more interventionist approach. Ken Livingstone spearheaded a shift in Labour conference policy on diversity. When the NEC met at the start of the 1989 conference, he successfully proposed a motion, which had come from the Democracy for the Individual and the Community committee. This called on a Labour government to establish and fund a Media Enterprise Board, providing funds and advice to aid start-ups. Its terminology also indicated the more market-oriented cultural industries approach, indicating the GLC and soft left influences.[801] The call for a Media Enterprise Board to 'help fund new and innovative media projects' became party policy at the 1989 conference.[802] However, it only made a short-lived appearance and did not figure in later Labour thinking.

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[799] He aimed for press and broadcasting to "...represent and reflect every strand of political opinion and cultural characteristic...", with "...diversity of ownership and equality of access ...". The deputy leader was concerned about private and government domination of the media. He wanted to provide "...safeguards against the dangers to democratic expression and public information which control – whether by dominant government or private ownership – inevitably brings". Yet, Hattersley's aspirations were undermined by the absence of plans for intervention that actively aided new ownership. With the threatened eclipse of Keynesian interventionism overall and the particular rejection of such weapons in the press arena, as a radical expression of that policy, his aims remained but a pipedream. (Labour, Party. 1988. *Democratic socialist aims and values*. London: Labour Party.: 6).

[800] It also now embraced considering newspaper exploitation of women's bodies. (Labour Party, *Conference 1983*: 176).

[801] Labour Party NEC, 'NEC Minutes at the 1989 Labour Party Conference', November 1, 1989, Labour Party Conference 1989.

[802] Labour Party, Conference (Ed.). 1989. *Report of the annual conference of the Labour Party*. London: Labour Party.: 173.

Instead, as Keynesianism fled from the leadership's agenda, Labour's policy on press ownership became more reconciled to the manifesto commitments and became based on classical liberal pluralist notions of anti-monopoly curbs. The leadership had already supported a Policy Review position that went to the 1988 conference, which was more minimal and market-oriented than previous party policy. But it was more specific in its legislation than the 1987 manifesto had been. An indication of the significance that the Labour frontbench still placed in the CPBF was that the Shadow Trade minister Bryan Gould unveiled the new policy to the organisation's meeting, pre-empting the 1988 Labour Party conference by a few days. Both organisations' delegates were informed that, rather than creating bodies that would help diversity, Labour would create legislation for divestment, along with cross-ownership legislation. The number of newspapers any one company could own would be limited and there would be 'fair competition' legislation.

Thus, in an important challenge to the media giants, they were to be divested of their newspapers. But, as with previous manifesto commitments, there would be no help for new owners in running the discarded titles – leading to the possibility that these newspapers would go under.[803]

However, even this policy pledge was short-lived. Despite the fact that the 1988 and 1989 party conferences had endorsed a more interventionist policy, the later review document *Opportunity Britain* and the final report *Meet the Challenge, Make the Change* did not reflect this. The earlier assurances concerning ownership diversity evaporated. So *Opportunity Britain* regarded broadening the press was "...essential to our democracy". Yet both documents only bound Labour to a review of concentration by the Monopoly and Mergers Commission. There was a vague reference to strengthening that body to deal

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[803] Nonetheless, an indication of the pressure on the leadership from the press on ownership was that, despite the Labour frontbench's proposals being less radical than previous Labour pledges, it was noted that they were still attacked by parts of the press. (Anon. 1988. 'Labour launches media proposal', *Free Press* 49, October 1988).

with ownership changes.[804] Media union representatives rejected this shift. One pleaded to the 1989 conference: "We do not have the time to refer to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission...".[805]

DEMOCRATIC CONTROL

However, the Policy Review did not only affect diversity policy. Calls for democratic participation and control were also extinguished.

A throwback to the more radical stance of the past came with an attempt to provide an intellectual backdrop to the Policy Review, associated with the soft left. *The Labour Party's Values and Aims: An Unofficial Statement* by David Blunkett and Bernard Crick saw democracy and socialism as synonymous. Within this framework, the authors called for more democratic employee and user participation in the press, although they did not provide a blueprint for this.[806] However, little was heard from this point onwards from the mainstream soft left on democratising the press.

More typical was Hattersley's *Democratic Socialist Aims and Values*. Hattersley's inability to consider the need for state or private ownership to be democratised stymied his call for 'equality of access'.[807]

Nonetheless, a failed attempt to challenge this inertia on press democratisation came from another quarter. Along with the pressure towards the cultural industries approach, the

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[804] Labour, Party. 1991b. *Opportunity Britain : Labour's better way for the 1990s*. London: Labour Party.: 45, Labour Party, *Meet the challenge*: 59-60.

[805] Tony Hearn, representing the Broadcasting and Entertainment Trades Alliance, added: "We must know from day one exactly how we intend to control who controls the media. We have to have clearcut policy decisions on how we extend massively access to the media to democratic and underprivileged groups. For that, we frankly need much closer co-operation with Walworth Road than so far we have been privileged to have." (Labour Party, *Conference 1989*: 127). The previous year, Danny Sergeant, representing SOGAT '82, had welcomed Gould's commitment to the CPBF. (Labour Party, Conference (Ed.). 1988. *Report of the annual conference of the Labour Party*. London: Labour Party.: 116).

[806] Hattersley, Roy. 1987. *Choose freedom : the future for democratic socialism*. London: Michael Joseph.: 9.

[807] Indeed, the book which the document was heavily influenced by, Hattersley's previously-produced tome, *Choose Freedom*, tentatively championed co-operatives and cited the GLEB positively. Yet, there was no mention of this with regard to the media. (Hattersley, *Choose freedom*).

New Left GLC experience had kept a radical spark in favour of broader participation in the press alive within the Labour Party. In contrast, by now, the NEC's union representatives strongly backed the leadership in quelling this radical thought. In the previous chapter, we indicated that the media unions were reluctant to embrace industrial democracy when faced with it, but would support paper aspirations. By the late 1980s, they were so intent on supporting the leadership that they would even refute resolutions on democratising ownership behind closed doors. Yet, concurrently, other media unions still complained publicly that the party hierarchy ignored their input on broadcast diversity and democracy.[808] We shall further consider this aspect of union policy in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8.

At an NEC in May 1989, Livingstone proposed that the Labour Party should again support co-operatives in the press. But the effect of the *News on Sunday* failure was to work against this bid. SOGAT official and former Media Study Group member Ted O'Brien spoke to oppose this on the NEC, citing this and other negative experiences.[809] This was the last attempt to introduce press co-operative policy on the NEC. The only remnant of the previous commitments to democracy and accountability in the press that survived for much of the Kinnock years was the pledge to introduce a statutory right of reply, which we shall consider in Appendix 2 of this chapter. However, this was not included in the 1992 manifesto.

Thus, the Labour leadership's interest in press ownership reform of any sort decreased in the 1980s, despite what could be seen as a bias against Labour being as pronounced as at previous points. Lord Corbett says that Roy Hattersley, who had overall responsibility for

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[808] Labour Party, *Conference 1989*: 127.

[809] Indicating the effect of demoralisation that the previous failures of co-operative newspapers had had on the unions, according to Tony Benn, O'Brien explicitly announced that: "...democracy didn't work in the running of a newspaper." Instead, the newspapers' failure had "...cost the trade union movement a lot of money". Livingstone's motion was defeated on the NEC by 15 votes to six. (Benn, *The end of an era*: 565). Ted O'Brien was a new member on to the Communications Committee in 1989 joining sitting member Gordon Colling. (Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives.).

the policy as Shadow Home Secretary, "...never showed much real interest..." in detailed work on press and media ownership despite his previous concerns.[810]

Aside from the other pressures to push press intervention down the agenda, such as Keynesianism's demise, the rejection of democratic control, union demoralisation and media business pressure, another important factor in this shift was the new emphasis on political communications, as we shall detail in the first appendix to this chapter.

THE POLICY REVIEW AND THE SHADOW COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY

The leadership became more interested in other methods for gaining Labour representation associated with political marketing, at same time as it judged that methods for achieving representation associated with the New Left were outmoded. The development of the new marketing strategy had to do with a lot more than its relationship to the press. Nevertheless, there were some direct connections.

The Labour leadership was initially prompted by one of the Minority Report's co-authors to concentrate on an alternative method to aid Labour representation, rather than developing policy to aid diversity.[811] There was now a clear division between these seemingly synonymous aspirations. Following this, Dominic Wring, in his perceptive and persuasive study of political marketing in the Labour Party, identifies the involvement of the LCC in calling for a professionalisation of communication, the use of media, polling and marketing.[812] However, he does not elaborate on this. Yet, the LCC group's organising secretary explicitly prioritised representation over diversity in justifying this move. He concluded that political communication was a more pressing concern than newspaper reform. There was "...little point in whinging about press bias from the Opposition". Instead, what was required was what would become the familiar demand that all Labour people should "...speak with a united voice..." and that sophisticated

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[810] "I mean he never got in the way. If you told him, he was interested, and if you didn't, I don't think he would ask." (Corbett interview).

[811] This link with the Minority Report is discussed further in Appendix One of this chapter.

[812] Wring Dominic, James. 1997. *Political marketing and the Labour Party : the relationship between campaign strategy and intra-organisational power*. PhD, Cambridge: Cambridge University .: 168, 171.

marketing and advertising techniques should be involved.[813] Not all that the LCC called for was implemented. But it was an important pointer.[814] The TUC's failure to affect reform while Labour was in opposition also influenced it in backing away from structural reform.[815]

As the first appendix to this chapter details, the leadership considered that trying to manipulate coverage in the press and the media that already existed would achieve the goal that changing the newspaper and media environment was thought to achieve. That was a fairer press for Labour. It considered that it needed to deal with the newspapers before it got into office. Indeed, its perception was that if it did not deal with the press, then it *would never get back in.*

The period since the 1970s saw a reaction against earlier political communications methods, prompted by the 1970 defeat. Callaghan rejected being 'packaged like cornflakes'. Under Foot, the use of research pollsters was questioned.[816] However, this changed after 1983. Kinnock's leadership rediscovered and developed other techniques to make the press fairer to the party.

The leadership concentrated on developing a sophisticated news management machinery. Eric Shaw identifies that the Shadow Communications Agency (SCA), which the appendix shall consider further, came into its own in explaining Labour's defeat.[817] The SCA was decisive in mapping out the new path for Labour that its Policy Review traversed. Although there was some continuity, Wring shows that campaigning took on a renewed significance in the 1980s. What changed was that the leadership became far more concerned to appeal to what strategists considered to be the electorate's opinion. Before 1987, it reintroduced sophisticated opinion research and advertising and, after

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[813] Paul Convery, 'Letter to NEC Members', no date, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives.
[814] Wring, *Political marketing and the Labour Party*: 168-9.
[815] Mike Smith, TUC head of secretariat and former head of its press and information department, viewed that "...the experience throughout the 80s was that our pressure on governments was to precious little purpose. The various ministers responsible would see delegations from time to time, but the idea of us having an influence on policy I think was pretty limited." (Interview with Mike Smith, October 1 2002).
[816] Wring, *Political marketing and the Labour Party*: 144-5.
[817] Shaw, Wilderness: 125.

1987, it established a market-led approach to satisfying what were perceived to be the electorate wants and needs. According to Wring, while the Policy Review accepted the market in the economic sphere, it also "...marked another turning point in the embrace of another 'market' – in the domain of politics".[818]

Implementing this marketing strategy, as Wring indicates, was key in creating an increasingly centralised organisation with a more powerful leadership and passive membership.[819] The Policy Review saw the soft left and the right in the party come together to reorientate the party's policy, with union support, against the rest of the left.[820] The leadership-dominated NEC facilitated further centralisation to make the Policy Review the key fount of decision-making, over and above that of the conference, with union support.[821] Under Kinnock, the unions generally returned to their traditional role as a bedrock of 'social democratic centralism' – solid leadership allies.[822] But this process saw their increasing marginalisation, as well as that of the soft left.[823]

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[818] Wring, *Political marketing and organisational development*: 12-15.
[819] *Ibid.*: 17.
[820] As a soft left-influenced newspaper, *Tribune* backed the Policy Review since "...socialist ideas needed to able to stand up to open debate". (*Tribune* editorial. 1987. 'Time for some serious thinking', *Tribune*, 2 October 1987). The LCC and the *Marxism Today* wing of the Communist Party rejected a unity call by Ken Livingstone, Peter Hain, Joan Ruddock and others. (Livingstone, Ken, Joan Ruddock, Peter Hain et al. 1987. 'Labour, the Liberals and the unity of the Labour Left', *Tribune* 21/28 August 1987, Rees, Caroline. 1987. 'LCC executive rules out 'links with ultra-Left'', *Tribune*, 11 September 1987, Caroline. 1987. Caroline Rees, 'Back Left alliances says McLennan', *Tribune*, 18 September 1987).
[821] It successfully persuaded the 1989 conference to accept that Policy Review documents were unamendable by Labour conferences – they could only be accepted or rejected. (CLPD, *CLPD Newsletter, No.46 (Conference Edition)*, September/October 1992). The 1990 conference approved, in principle, the creation of a National Policy Forum, which also provided for greater party centralisation. Instead of the party as a whole having the chance to vote on motions which came to conference, it would be the party forum that would decide which motions were taken, further instituting this process of centralised policy-making, independent of direct activist involvement. (Labour Party National Executive, Committee. 1990. *Democracy and policy making for the 1990s : statement*. London: Labour Party., Labour, Party. 1992. *Agenda for change*. London: The Labour Party.: 28). The role of the unions in facilitating this centralising process can be indicated by the fact that it was the NGA print union's representative on the NEC, Gordon Colling who proposed in 1989 that NEC decision-making be centralised with fewer, more powerful committees. (NEC 'Minutes', October 4 1989, NEC 'Minutes', October 25 1989).
[822] Mandelson later told the TUC congress that the unions "...helped Neil Kinnock save the Labour Party in the 1980s". (Peter Mandelson, Speech to the 1998 Annual Trades Union Congress, London: Trades Union Congress 1998, quoted in Ludlam, Steve. 2000. 'Norms and Blocks: Trade Unions and the Labour Party since 1964' in Brivati and Heffernan: 231). Aided by sympathetic union officials in the name of electability, Labour's new employment secretary Tony Blair ensured that most of the Conservative legislation would remain on the statute book if Labour regained office. This included the bar on closed shops, which we saw had caused such problems for the 1974-9 Labour government in its relations with

With those around the SCA, what is striking was how resigned they were to press bias and how scant were their alternatives to this. We have already noted that Kinnock blamed the tabloids for the 1992 defeat. Yet research produced by the SCA accepted "...the hostile press (with which we are stuck)..." and "...Conservative control of the media...".[824] Also, Philip Gould, while identifying this bias, advocated challenging the operation of individual journalists but not the structure in which they operated.[825] Implementing the right of reply, for instance, was not even seen as significant. His meticulous chronicling of the implementation of Kinnock's new media strategy did not even hint that the SCA had any regard for challenging press ownership as a way of counteracting imbalance.[826] This indicates in what low regard the media strategists close to Kinnock held this policy.

There was now a divide within Labour. A Chinese wall existed between the two positions. One shadow minister describes the process as "...operating in isolation...", with different strands independently developing policy in the period after 1987.[827] Those, more on the left, were still trying to persuade the party to implement thoroughgoing policies to promote diversity – and a few to democratise the press. However, the fatalism, which had previously characterised those concerned about press bias on the right, was also shared in a particular way by this new right and the media strategists that became a dominating force.

As we shall further discover in the first appendix to this chapter, by 1992 the strategists had extensive power over policy development. An indication of this was that a then

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newspaper management. (Minkin, Lewis. 1991. *The contentious alliance : trade unions and the Labour Party*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.: 472, Shaw, Wilderness: 128).

[823] Shaw, Wilderness: 129-133, Hefferman and Marqusee: 166-184.

[824] Ed Straw, 'Opposition into Government – A Strategic Framework', June 26 1987, Leslie Butterfield, Roddy Glen and Paul Southgate, 'Towards a Communication Strategy for the Labour Party, An examination of attitudes amongst women aged 25-44' no date, Neil Kinnock Archives, Churchill Archives.

[825] Philip Gould pinpointed a key factor in Labour's defeat in this period as a "...fearsomely hostile..." and "...terrible..." press. In his memoirs, he outlines evidence that a large percentage of the election coverage in 1987 in the *Sun*, *Daily Mail* and *Daily Star* was "...Labour knocking...". (Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 77, 130-1).

[826] Gould, *The unfinished revolution.*

[827] "There is left hands and right hands." (Corbett interview).

shadow minister made clear to the author he was not involved directly in the policy discussions surrounding the manifesto. The then frontbench spokesman, now Lord Corbett, says he was treated like a "...mere backbencher..." in these discussions. Yet, he was aware of the discussions of the political communication strategists and the leadership, where the concern was not to directly challenge media businesses. The leadership placed most emphasis on political marketing and little on press ownership policy. That policy's most prominent aspect, cross-ownership legislation, by the time of the 1992 manifesto, was 'kicked into the long grass', according to Corbett, with the strategists' involvement.[828]

[828] Lord Corbett told the author: "You stop looking for people to upset, and you stop saying 'no'. That was a cop-out in a sense...The party strategists were saying 'No, that is far too hard edged', you know it sounded like 'back to the barricades' as it were." (*Ibid.*).
[828] *Ibid.*

CONCLUSION

Despite all the pledges that the Labour leadership, particularly Roy Hattersley, had made on press reform, and Tory claims that Labour would revert to its previous radical position, Labour's 1992 election commitments were minimal.[829] The manifesto limited itself to merely calling for an "...urgent enquiry..." by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission into media ownership concentration, particularly cross-ownership.[830] In other words, a social democratic interventionist policy had been rejected for a more limited classical liberal pluralist notion of anti-monopoly curbs.

It was clear which company was the target of this policy – News Corporation. This made it easier to reject the cross-ownership policy as one born of spite. There were particular concerns that centred on Murdoch because of his particular dominance in the British national newspaper market, his globalising ambition, his political links and his anti-union record. Yet, it is hard to dispute that he was a media hate figure for Labour to unite around also because of his then hostility to Labour, his nationality and his acumen.[831] With satellite television, as with other areas, "Rupert Murdoch got in first and scooped the market...Capitalism is all about taking a risk. Rupert Murdoch got in and did it – successfully".[832]

The Labour leadership had concentrated on this individual more, with the hope of tackling the problems of party representation, and less on robust policies to regulate the market of which Murdoch was a participant. In taking this stance, it made it easier for a

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[829] Jones, George. 1992. 'Free press at risk from Labour, says Wakeham', *Daily Telegraph*, February 29 1992.
[830] Dale: 308. See also Shawcross, *Rupert Murdoch*: 542, David Owen, 'Hattersley Promise on Incomes', *Financial Times*, March 16 1992, Steve Thompson et. Al., 'Comment hits media stock', *Financial Times*, March 24 1992.
[831] A similar point is made by Freedman, 2000: 207.
[832] Austin Mitchell, House of Commons Hansard Debates for 24 April 1991, col.. 1171.

new even more market-oriented clique of Labour politicians to refute such policies, when other representation strategies were shown to be effective. Indeed, Tony Blair would later publicly embrace Mitchell's wider logic of not offending Murdoch. Concerns over representation had guided the earlier shift in the leadership's stance towards Maxwell. Later on, policy became more minimal and was about containment of the existing press conglomerates – rather than actively promoting further diversity or participation, while other methods for representation were pursued. Eventually this approach was downgraded into a call for an enquiry, with no guarantees of any legislation.

To conclude, we will consider how well the 'classic' positions on policy formation outlined earlier in this work can explain this evolution.

At the start of Kinnock's leadership, the backwash of the radicalising wave of the previous years was felt in local government. Mirroring this, the 1983 conference went beyond the relatively radical manifesto of earlier that year. It passed policy that reflected and went beyond a Scandinavian-style social market interventionist approach. At the same time, it also echoed the more marketised social democratic response coming from the cultural industry conceptions. Yet, the democratising ideas developed provided a more minimal version of the analysis of Marxists such as Raymond Williams and some social market notions. At this stage, crucial to its success was support from the unions, although it did not directly accord with what they proposed. The conference ignored the leadership-dominated NEC in passing this radical policy.

From then on, as the leadership came to dominate internal policy formation, press policy edged towards accommodating business and the market. However, this was not a linear process. The period up to 1987 had seen the leadership achieving dominance over the NEC in forming policy, while the left divided. The press ownership policy in the 1987 manifesto, for the most part, reflected this. There was a return to a more minimal version of the 1983 manifesto than the party conference proposals. However, the fact that it even reflected that somewhat interventionist document was an indication that the radical upsurge from 1979 onwards had not been completely quelled.

After that, the Policy Review saw a resurgence of interventionism with policy that again reflected both the Scandinavian-style social market interventionist and marketised cultural industry approaches. This reflected both the previous radicalising impetus on parts of the party and the influence of the cultural industries approach on its leadership. However, a reflection of leadership dominance was that once those around Kinnock rejected interventionism, so was it progressively expunged from press policy in the review process. There was, at first, a commitment to divestment and to legislate on cross-ownership. This was a move towards a liberal pluralist model, but one that confronted the press business' ownership. However, as the review gave way to the manifesto, this was replaced by rather vague commitment to cross-ownership legislation, consistent with a classical liberal pluralist position.

As for demands for press democratic control, a similar, but more muted, process to that with newspaper diversity developed. The 1983 conference motion reflected the previous radicalising phase's short-lived legacy, most notably felt by the municipal socialists. The unions supported it. The municipal socialists' most notable figurehead, Livingstone, attempted to revive demands for press democratic participation during the Policy Review. But by then, the media unions' representatives spearheaded the leadership's rejection of this approach, citing the *News on Sunday*'s failure. Instead, the only residue of previous calls for press accountability was a statutory right of reply, which did not even make its way into the 1992 manifesto.

This process – with the leadership's hand on the tiller of policy formation and control over the NEC – would seem to accord with a view that, after the earlier aberration, an elitist explanation of the party's power relations was most appropriate. The wishes of the unions and the activists expressed at the party conference, with regard to diversity at least, had been ignored. However, this does not explain the pressures on the leadership itself. Although, there were conduits for this internally, they were mostly external. There was the impact of Thatcherism and the collapse of the Soviet Union and the initial influence of press proprietor Robert Maxwell on the leadership's policy. The pressure on the Labour leadership to shift policy to accommodate to these external factors would seem to accord with a Marxist analysis.

The development of union power in this period would appear to concur more closely with the elitist and Marxist views of policy development, as well as that of Minkin's. The unions' early support for more radical positions on diversity and democracy at the 1983 conference appears to challenge the elitist stance. Yet, some unions' later subordinate role was more at one with the elitists' view. This weakening influence and the leadership's increased power was highlighted by the unions' sway on the SCA, as we shall see in the first appendix to this chapter. This was negligible. The unions did not even have a place on the Campaign Management Team, which had formally overseen the SCA's work, but which by 1992 had its power wrested from it.[833]

The unions' shifting stance could be better explained by the view of the Marxists and Minkin, in the sense that they both considered that it has been the unions that have proscribed the leadership's room for manoeuvre. However, the unions' lessening role in the latter half of the 1980s would *seem* to challenge Miliband's characterisation of their 'crushing power'. Nevertheless, the Marxists' analysis, that the unions' degree of support for the leadership is tempered by rank and file pressure, goes some way to explain this power shift. Left industrial retreat and the failure of initiatives led to demoralisation, which, consequently, led to the end of the unions' radical turn. The major input the unions made into press policy in this period seems to have been an indication of this. The nationalist clause, which the unions, along with Kinnock, pioneered, was a product of the print unions' defeat. However, the unions by the end of this period were still pursuing policies more radical on diversity than those of the leadership.

Rather than policy to legislate against the existing newspaper firms, the leadership developed a new press strategy to woo them. However, one tension in this new course was with regard to News Corporation. By 1992, the Labour leadership placed special emphasis on cross-ownership. This prompted concerns that BSkyB cross-ownership was going to be targeted, forcing Murdoch to have to choose between the five national newspapers and the satellite broadcaster.[834] The effect of even talk of the Labour Party

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[833] Minkin, *Contentious alliance*: 415, 419.
[834] Shawcross, *Rupert Murdoch*: 542, Owen, Hattersley, Thompson.

legislating should not be underestimated. The *Financial Times* reported that fears of this had sent shares plummeting in those press firms that were BSkyB shareholders – News International, Pearson and Reed International.[835] News International was, of course, particularly affected. This indicated how important influencing party policy was for the press businesses. News International could well consider that, as Murdoch's sympathetic biographer put it: "...no company stood to lose as much from a Labour victory...", despite its minimal commitments.[836] How this tension between Labour and News Corporation would be resolved will be one subject of the next chapter.

[835] Owen, Hattersley, Thompson.
[836] Shawcross, *Rupert Murdoch*: 542.

7. Business News: Press Policy Under Blair and Smith

In 1993, the Labour shadow minister responsible for press ownership policy, Ann Clwyd announced that the "...unregulated growth of Mr Murdoch's empire..." was "...an affront to a democratic society....".[837] And her counterpart in the trade and industry brief, Robin Cook, concurred that it needed to be curbed by law.[838] Nine years later, the two equivalent Labour ministers, now in Government, jointly announced a self-avowed deregulatory package, which gave the press magnate the opportunity to expand into a hitherto unexploited area – terrestrial television.[839]

This chapter will explore why and how this shift came about. We will consider how press cross-ownership policy dramatically shifted and Labour newspaper policy's last bogeyman was appeased. Curran, in his insightful press reform study links press policy in the 1990s to general party acceptance of a neo-liberal agenda. So will this work. However, he possibly underplays how successive electoral defeats affected policy.[840] Equally, writers on New Labour and press news management have not fully charted the interrelation between press ownership policy on diversity and Labour representation through media news control.[841]

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[837] The statement was issued under the headline 'Sky Trek: The Next Degeneration', (Snoddy, Raymond.1993. 'Media mogul with the mostest: Rupert Murdoch's reach is global, prompting criticism that he has too much power', *Financial Times*, September 4 1993). See also Clwyd, Ann. 1993. 'Ann Clwyd, 'He's used his power to evade controls that governments might place on him'', *Daily Mirror*, September 3 1993.

[838] Robin Cook viewed that: "The domination of much of the media by one man is not healthy for democracy and is not fair for competition." (Cook, Robin and Clwyd, Ann. 1993. 'Cook and Clwyd call for MMC inquiry into Murdoch ownership', Labour Party Press Release, September 3 1993).

[839] DTI/DCMS, *Draft Communications Bill - Policy Narrative*, HMSO, 2002, DTI/DCMS, *Draft Communications Bill*, HMSO, 2002, Great Britain Department of, Trade, Industry, Media Great Britain Department for Culture, and Sport. 2002. *Draft Communications Bill regulatory impact assessment*: The Stationery Office, 2002.. The Trade and Industry Minister overseeing this was Patricia Hewitt, who, as Kinnock's secretary had been instrumental in him rejoining the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archive).

[840] Curran, *Press Reformism*.

[841] Bob Franklin, nevertheless, calls for regulation of press ownership and legislation to provide journalistic autonomy. He also refers to the influence of Labour's press regulation on News International's coverage of the party in government. (Franklin, Bob, and Trust Catalyst. 1998. *Tough on soundbites, tough on the causes of soundbites : New Labour and news management : a Catalyst paper*. London: Catalyst Trust, 1998. and Franklin, Bob. 2001. 'The Hand of History: New Labour, News Management and Governance' Pp. 130-144 in *New Labour in government*, edited by J. Smith Martin and Steve Ludlam. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2001.: 130-144).

In contrast, we shall consider how the trade union leadership and Labour membership acquiesced in this continuing shift from Labour representation through diversity to one based on the new media strategy. That strategy's by-product was to sacrifice diversity. Yet, it succeeded in providing representation for a long period.

This chapter shall describe how the Labour representation goal was achieved – at the cost of going further than the previous government in minimising diversity and avoiding a challenge to newspaper ownership power.

This chapter explores far more than the party's relationship to one man. Nevertheless, the connection with Murdoch will be a central part. The Blairite critic and journalist Nick Cohen wrote that: "...the most bewildered beggar on the street can understand New Labour's dealings with Murdoch in a moment".[842] This chapter shall argue that the relationship is a little more complex. Nonetheless, it will be suggested that, while New Labour entered into no formal pacts with any businesses, including News Corp, as Labour insiders reveal, there was an understanding. As one Blairite MP and media specialist told the author, in gaining newspaper support, it was understood that no policies would be adopted to challenge the press.[843]

Sometimes when looking for complex answers for motivations, one can ignore the more mundane. This chapter shall suggest that Murdoch came to support Labour because its leadership was more prepared to act upon his wishes than the traditional business party – the Conservatives. While the Tory government considered laws to exclude Murdoch, the Labour Party leadership rejected the minimal ownership controls in its 1992 manifesto. While Labour has not unreservedly backed News Corporation, this chapter will explore how, in pursuing a minimalist classical liberal agenda, the Labour leadership made its peace with its previous backer turned tormentor.

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[842] Cohen, Nick. 2000. *Cruel Britannia : reports on the sinister and the preposterous*. London: Verso, 2000.: 144.
[843] Linton interview.

The policy struggle under Smith

John Smith was elected as leader in 1992 on the back of Labour's fourth election defeat in a row. His predecessor had lost with the press and media strategists at the helm. Smith's reign was marked by a struggle between those branded 'Old Labour', or traditionalist, and the ascendant new right, termed 'modernisers' by commentators taking New Labour terminology at face value.[844] The traditionalists, as we shall see, blamed the strategists for the defeat. The new right suggested that to win office Labour needed to change along with the electorate; targeting aspirational Thatcher supporters and further embracing the market.[845]

However, a decisive problem with this argument was that, despite all these claims of change, the most discernable shift was that the electorate was turning to Labour.[846] Labour consistently maintained a significant opinion poll lead from autumn 1992. This made the traditional social democrat's call for just 'one more heave' a convincing strategy. Smith could win.[847] In the 1997 election's aftermath, the leadership repeated the mantra that Labour was 'elected as New Labour, we should govern as New Labour'.

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[844] Whether the New Labour project is a modernising one can be debated. It has been difficult to see how Blair's interest in an explicitly Christian morality, with its medieval roots, provides an example of modernisation, for instance.

[845] Labour was said to have not changed sufficiently to accommodate to shifting social attitudes. A series of Fabian pamphlets published at this time shared a similar prognosis to that advanced by the SCA under Kinnock. (Driver and Martell: 24-5. See also, for instance, McSmith, Andy. 1993. *John Smith : playing the long game*. London: Verso.: 237-8, 240, McSmith, Andy, and Party Labour. 1994. *John Smith : a life, 1938-1994*. London, Mandarin, 1994.: Mandarin.: 298-301, Sopel, Jon. 1995. *Tony Blair : the moderniser*. London: Michael Joseph.: 138.). One 'moderniser', Tony Blair, had earlier embraced a classical liberal argument to argue that among 'vested interests' Labour should challenge state control and the trade union movement, in favour of the individual. (Rentoul, John. 1995. *Tony Blair*. London: Little Brown and Co.: 238-242). Pro-market shift was needed to demonstrate 'economic competence'. (Driver and Martell: 25).

[846] The Community Charge had undermined Conservative support, despite Labour strategists' reluctance to emphasise this issue. A new factor was that the key question of economic competence, which had dogged Kinnock's chances, was now a concern directed at the Conservatives. The Tories' economic strategy had collapsed that autumn, with the failure of the ERM.

[847] Fielding, *Labour Party*: 24. For some discussion of the 'one more heave' strategy, see McSmith, *Playing*: 237-8, 240, McSmith, *John Smith*: 298-301, Thompson, Paul, Ben Lucas, and Committee Labour Party Co-ordinating. 1999. *The forward march of modernisation : a history of the LCC, 1978-1998*. London: Labour Co-ordinating Committee.: 12-3, Davies, Andrew. 1996. *To build a new Jerusalem : the British Labour Party from Keir Hardie to Tony Blair*. London: Abacus.: 436.

However, we can see that the assumption behind this slogan was misguided. The electorate's shift to the party preceded New Labour's advent by two years. Yet, critics of the 'traditionalists' were on firmer ground in questioning their rivals' rationale.[848]

In this situation, it is perhaps not surprising that Smith himself wavered between the two camps.[849] As a member of the old right, he also distanced himself from the third position – the democratising thrust of the Labour new left. The leadership flirted with Keynesianism for a short time before the autumn of 1993, then adopted a more unambiguously neo-liberal strategy.[850] Analogously, as we shall see, the party's position on newspaper ownership went through a more radical moment before moving closer to that which would be advocated by Blair.

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[848] It was not clear which Labour Party tradition the traditionalists wished to return to. (Rentoul: 267-8). If it was the old Keynesian-style post-war consensus, this was over. In their defensive stance, the traditionalists did not possess a complete and positive strategy for governing.

[849] His time was an interregnum. (Panitch and Leys: 225, Fielding, *Labour Party*: 87). He was 'Playing the Long Game'. This meant *avoiding* siding with a faction when he could honourably do so. (McSmith, *Playing*). Many commentators and insiders associate him with the traditional social democrats. The new right 'modernisers' were said to view him as 'sleepwalking to oblivion'. He had anaesthetised Labour into a 'semi-comatose' state. (Wright, Tony, and Matt Carter. 1997. *The people's party : an illustrated history of the Labour Party*. London: Thames & Hudson Ltd.: 166-7, 169, McSmith, *John Smith*: 331, Davies, *Jerusalem*: 436, Fielding, *Labour Party*: 85-8). Philip Gould saw Smith as no moderniser. Gould quotes Smith as announcing during his leadership contest: "If radical change involves the Labour Party subverting its principles and aborting its mission, then I'm conservative in that very narrow sense." (Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 161, quoting *Sunday Times* February 2 1992). This view was shared more widely. According to Fielding: "One union official even jokingly spoke of Smith's 'Horlicks leadership'." (Fielding, *Labour Party*: 91).

[850] Party documents tentatively advocated public sector growth and full employment in Britain and, more forcefully, as a Europe-wide initiative at this earlier stage. (Anderson and Mann: 95-6). Later, for instance, despite the Keynesian-sounding title, by the 1983, the document *Rebuilding Britain* was using pro-market language to advocate debt reduction and proposals to "...lever in private finance wherever possible..." in the public sector. (Labour, Party. 1993. *Rebuilding Britain : Budget action for investment and jobs*. London: Labour Party, 1993.: 1, 13, 14). However, it was only under Blair that these facets were developed into a coherent package. (Driver and Martell: 40-1).

Organisational changes under Smith and Blair

The modernisers influenced Smith in his organisational control over policy-making, nonetheless. Although he valued the union's role, Smith weakened trade union influence, under pressure from the modernisers, most notably with the adoption of one member one vote (OMOV) for selecting MPs.[851]

OMOV seemed to signal greater membership power. Jennifer Lees-Marshment, for instance, suggests that New Labour also increased member participation rights.[852] New Labour certainly cloaked its reforms in the language of membership empowerment. However, this was part of a process, following Kinnock's reign, to "...reduce the influence of party members and re-educate them", with the role of conference "...effectively undermined...", as one academic Blair sympathiser described it.[853]

Instead, a new body, the National Policy Forum, now formally developed policy, with the NEC's role "...significantly reduced".[854] Constituencies and unions had little representation on the forum.[855] No motions from the constituencies or unions could now be taken directly to the party conference, except if they were very narrowly-defined

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[851] The 1993 conference agreed to Smith's demands to adopt one member one vote (OMOV) for selecting MPs, cut the union's influence in selecting the leader and reduce the union's vote at party conference. (Ludlam, Norms and Blocks: 232, 234, Shaw, *1945*: 192-5. See also Fielding, *Labour Party*: 85-7. Wright, *The people's party*: 166-7, Panitch and Leys: 225, McSmith, *Playing*: 244-6).

[852] Lees-Marshment, Jennifer. 2001. 'The Marriage of Politics and Marketing', *Political Studies* 49, 692-713: 694.

[853] Smith, Martin J. 2000. 'The Transition to New Labour' in Brivati and Heffernan: 146-7. New Labour transformed the party so that demands from the unions and constituencies could be blocked or eliminated. With the unions' role weakened, after Blair was elected it was the turn of the party conference, the NEC, and, with this, ultimately the unions again, to have their decision-making power curtailed. Power was to be centralised, with the new Labour government's leadership given far greater involvement in deciding the party's policies. See Callaghan, *Retreat*: 197-8.

[854] Smith, Transition: 147. Previously, under Smith, there had been a renamed and restructured NEC Policy Committee. (Benn, *Free at last*: 144). In overseeing this new forum and policy development, the NEC effectively had its position usurped. A Joint Policy Committee, chaired by the prime minister and composed equally of the Government and the NEC, would operate as the 'steering group' for the policy forum. The union's majority control on the NEC would end. (Ludlam, Norms and Blocks: 232). Although the conference would remain the supreme arbiter ostensibly, it would be this policy committee that would take "...strategic oversight of policy development". (Labour Party National Executive, Committee. 1997. *Partnership in power*. London: National Executive Committee, Labour Party, 1997).

[855] Less than a third came from constituencies and union representatives were to occupy only just over one sixth of the seats. (Ludlam, Norms and Blocks: 232).

EU against demand-led macroeconomic policies.[862] The new market idealisation was articulated in the.watershed new Clause IV.[863]

Yet, there was a tension in this new market-led framework, which we will witness with regard to media cross-ownership policy, between Labour's aim to be the champion of small and medium-sized business and its emphasis on export-led growth.[864]

Economic globalisation, the press and cross-ownership[865]

Labour's economic analysis was guided by the globalisation concept and it structured press ownership policy. It considered that the nation-state's sovereignty had considerably weakened. An important aspect of New Labour's take on globalisation was the shift to a world dominated by capital flight. This phenomenon is one where investors are able to quickly take their money out of the country, if their interests are threatened. This has been heightened by the communications revolution where, as Blair told Japanese businesspeople in 1996, this can happen at "...a flick of a switch or the push of a button...".[866]

What we need to grasp from this is its impact on regulation. Those considering globalisation have emphasised that the point of capital flight is that it indicates that

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[862] Webster, Paul. 1997. 'Britain sank Jospin's EU jobs scheme', *The Guardian*, June 21 1997, Kettle, Martin. 1997. 'Labour's bright new dawn ends at Dover', *The Guardian*, June 21 1997. See also Marquand, David. 1997. 'After Euphoria: The Dilemmas of New Labour', *The Political Quarterly*, 4: 335-8: 336, Anderson and Mann: 114-5.

[863] While the gesture to ditch the old Clause IV may have been mainly symbolic, in the new clause we learnt that that the Labour Party was working for "...a dynamic economy, serving the public interest, in which the enterprise of the market and the rigour of competition are joined with the forces of partnership...". Labour, Party. 1984. *Rulebook of the Labour Party*: London : 4 , quoted in Taylor Gerald, R. 1997. *Labour's renewal? : the policy review and beyond.* Basingstoke: Macmillan.: 171. See also Anderson and Mann: 32.

[864] Labour Party, *Vision for growth*: 47, Blair, Tony, and Party Labour. 1997. *New Labour : because Britain deserves better.* London: Labour Party, 1997.: 9-10, 12-13.

[865] This work will not consider the question of cultural globalisation.

[866] Blair, Tony. 1996. *New Britain : my vision of a young country.* London: Fourth Estate, 1996.: 120. This flick of a switch metaphor became quite a favourite in New Labour writings on globalisation. As one party document put it the year before, the world economy had changed to create "...footloose companies..." operating in "...global and fast-moving markets...". (Labour, Party. 1995a. *A new economic future for Britain : economic and employment opportunities for all.* London: Labour Party, 1995.: 6).

multinational corporations can hold nation-states to ransom. That is, by virtue of these huge capital shifts, the transnationals can dictate to governments on regulation, along with other areas of government control – backed by a relocation threat. A similar argument is regarded as true with regard to press and media cross-ownership regulations, as we shall see later.

New Labour accepted the consequences of what Blair called "...the disciplines of the international economy...".[867] As he told the News Corporation's Leadership Conference on the Hayman Islands in 1995, which we will discuss further later, globalisation was a technologically-determinist phenomenon that "...is reducing the power and capacity of government to control its domestic economy free from external influence...".[868]

Thus, New Labour implied that this process was part of an *objective and inevitable* 'tidal wave' of change, not a product of choice by conscious actors or a tendency with counter-tendencies. It obscured the reality – that multinationals and international financiers had been agents of these changes and had employed technology to bring about convergence. Moreover, the Labour leadership wilfully obscured the idea that governments had choices in their actions and had aided these shifts.[869] Linguistics specialist Norman Fairclough identified how New Labour's language hid this. It described globalisation or technology as the actor, rather than the companies or governments. This, of course, disguised the leadership's role and absolved it from its actions.[870]

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[867] Blair, *New Britain*: 118. The same speech saw two of the consequences of those disciplines as being that "...tax rates need to be internationally as well as nationally competitive..." and that there should be no "...rigidity or to inflexibility in labour markets...". (*Ibid.*: 121-3).

[868] Blair, T, 'Speech to News Corp Leadership Conference, Hayman Islands, Australia, July 17 1995', in *Ibid.*: 204.

[869] They had helped create the disciplinary 'iron cage'. It was the actions of governments in the 1970s onwards which had added to the present power of the multinationals and the financiers. (Callaghan, *Retreat*: 234).

[870] Fairclough, Norman. 2000. *New labour, new language?* London: Routledge, 2000.: 23-34. Just one example of this comes from Blair's Mais lecture where he argues that: "We must recognise that the UK is situated in the middle of an active global market for capital – a market which is less subject to regulation today that it has been for several decades. Since it is inconceivable that the UK would want to withdraw unilaterally from this global market-place, we must instead adjust our policies to its existence." (Blair, *New Britain*: 89-90).

Behind this shift was a reaction to radical right neo-liberalism, which it shared with Clinton and the so-called New Democrats.[871] Philip Gould advised Blair, after becoming leader, that he faced "...'Conservative hegemony'..." and that New Labour needed to rebuild "...completely from the ground up...".[872] As we have already suggested, the shift was not as abrupt as this. Yet Heffernan, particularly, convincingly argues that, simply put, Thatcher developed a new paradigm and the Labour leadership progressively came to accept it. Britain saw a tension at both elite and mass levels in the established consensus by the 1970s. The parties went in different directions, creating alternatives. The two alternatives were fought over, with the Thatcherite neo-liberal option coming out on top. Labour viewed that it 'lost' the 1980s and thus followed the Conservatives, who were said to have 'won' that decade. New Labour eventually indicated that any alternative would need to be developed from this starting point.[873] There was "...an acceptance of the economic legacy of Thatcherism ..." as the neo-liberal *Economist* crowingly put it.[874]

All the aspects of the 'inevitable' globalisation mantra were also Thatcherite dictats that Labour had accepted progressively as its election defeats mounted up. Globalisation acted as an impersonal justification for a course Labour had taken and a way of deflecting the blame from the Labour leadership for accepting that neo-liberal path.[875] New Labour

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[871] Driver and Martell: 172-3. The Australian Labor Party, whose leader Paul Keating was said to be close to Blair, and had seen a sharp lurch to the right, could be seen as another role model apart from the US Democrats. (Manners, Bruce. 1995. 'Blair learns from down-under world where Left is Right', *Sunday Telegraph*, December 31 1995, Pilger, John. 1994. 'The very best of mates', *Guardian Weekend*, July 23 1994, Gallagher, Tony. 1995. 'Blair, Murdoch and some disturbing questions about the superhighway', *Daily Mail*, October 5 1995).

[872] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 212.

[873] Heffernan, *New Labour and Thatcherism*. In this sense, the 1997 election success was "...was not another 1945...but a 1951..." where, like Churchill's Conservatives, Labour had to "...adjust to and succeed in a political world which was not of their making...". (Crouch, Colin. 1997. 'The Terms of the Neo-Liberal Consensus' *The Political Quarterly* :352-360.: 352).

[874] Leader, 'The vision thing: Tony Blair says his mission is to modernise Britain. It is not quite clear what he means', *The Economist*, September 27 1997.

[875] It took the Thatcherite *Economist* to argue that: "New Labour's fondness for talking about globalisation may be partly because it provides a politically acceptable way to ditch old ideas – 'it was not that we were wrong you see, it's just that times have changed.'" (Leader, 'All mod cons: Tony Blair's economic inheritance', *The Economist*, September 27 1997). Globalisation instructed that business regulation would

effectively constructed: "...neo-liberalism itself as a given and irreversible fact of life".[876] As Mandelson latterly put it: "... globalisation punishes hard any country that tries to run its economy by ignoring the realities of the market or prudent public finances. In this strictly narrow sense ... we are all 'Thatcherite' now".[877]

This is not to say that there were not policy differences between New Labour and the Conservative Party.[878] (Nor did the shift happen as incrementally as this simple narrative suggests). What New Labour grandly termed the 'Third Way' – between undiluted neo-liberalism and Keynesian corporatism – also involved an emphasis on supply side measures, most notably on 'education, education, education' and 'New Deal' employment measures.[879] A communitarian influence on crime and welfare policies provided the call that rights should be matched by responsibilities.[880]

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have to be minimal. Labour had committed itself to slashing 'outdated regulation', further than that operated by the Conservatives. So party documents argued: "Labour does not believe in unnecessary outdated regulation on business...in general, Labour recognizes the virtue of cutting red tape to reduce the burden of petty regulation wherever possible, while maintaining effective safeguards where necessary." (Labour Party, *Vision for growth*: 12). Globalisation also dictated that national Keynesianism had to be abandoned. Tax and spend socialism had to be ruled out. "The growing integration of the world economy – in which capital and, to a lesser extent, labour move freely – means that it is not possible for Britain to sustain budget deficits or tax regimes that are wildly out of line with other major industrial countries. One of the requirements of our tax structure is to attract enterprise into the UK from overseas." (Blair, *New Britain*: 89-90). Yet, as we saw, this had started to happen in the 1980s. Also, in the name of 'modernisation' and accepting the operation of the "...new global markets...", came market liberalisation. Thus, it was suggested: "For industry and jobs, there's no switching the clock back, but measures to modernise and equip our business and people for the new global markets." (*Ibid.*: 23).

[876] Fairclough: 28. Mulgan is another who by the time Labour was about to get into power saw a globalised world with a constrained ability of governments to act within it. As Mulgan put it, governments: "...need to be able to smell the way the world is moving, and adapt to it". (Interview with Lloyd, John. 1997. 'Blair seeks current heirs for intellectual electricity', *Financial Times*, April 26 1997).

[877] He was writing after organising a Third Way conference with Blair and Clinton in 2002. (Mandelson, Peter. 2002. 'There's plenty of life in the 'new' Third Way yet', *The Times*, June 10, 2002).

[878] For one thing, a core within the party still did not share these New Labour values.

[879] For a definition of the Third Way as involving public spending control and supply-side measures see Blair, Tony. 1998. 'A Modern Britain in a Modern Europe: speech to the annual friends of Nieuwspoort dinner, Ridderzall', The Hague. An early indication of this emphasis came with the Labour Party statement: "It is no longer sufficient to rely on the old national levers of demand management...it is failures of supply – in investment, in education and in training ... that lie at the heart of Britain's chronic economic weakness...". (Labour, Party. 1995b. *Rebuilding the economy*. London: Labour Party, 1995.: 6). As Callaghan wryly states, this analysis: "...would have been a surprise to the highly educated and highly skilled people of Russia and Eastern Europe, still starved of inward investment ten years after the collapse of the Communist regimes". (Callaghan, *Retreat*: 158.) Attempts to more broadly define the Third Way have had an occasional tendency to be vapid. So Gould quoted approvingly from Clinton a definition of the Third Way thus: "People do not believe in the rhetoric of left and right ... they have real problems, and they are crying desperately for someone who believes the purpose of government is to solve their problems and

Aspects of New Labour's consideration of globalisation also marked it out from pure Thatcherite neo-liberalism. The new right leadership, at least at first, saw that minimal government intervention could manage globalisation to bring benefits.[881] Also, some of the widely held hopes of non-Conservatives on domestic policy, dashed in Labour's first term, were realised to a small degree as the Government settled into its second.[882]

But, overall, there was an altered political "...ground broken and reset...", primarily by Thatcher, as well as Major, around which Labour gravitated.[883] Going beyond the Downesian model, which sees that electors influence parties, and Dunleavy's conception that parties influence electors, Heffernan recognises that parties can influence one another. The new ground reflected political change and a reaction to the Conservative's ability to control the political climate and achieve repeated electoral success.[884]

However, implicitly, New Labour had left some small room for movement, even within the globalisation 'straitjacket'. The 'hyperglobalist' thesis sees self-sufficiency and sovereign power having withered away.[885] New Labour has tended to vary between this

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make progress." Gould's own attempt to consider it was that: "Halfway solutions linking old models don't work. New Labour should be positioned in the centre." (Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 236, 251).

[880] Driver and Martell: 118-20, 130-2, Anderson and Mann: 243-8, Sopel: 145. For the link between the Clinton, the communitarians and New Labour, see Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 233-4, Rentoul: 285-6 and Sopel: 145. For the argument that this rejected Thatcherite neo-liberal individualism in favour of conservatism see Driver and Martell: 28-9, 167, 169.

[881] This is how New Labour regarded the Third Way emphasis on education. Mandelson and Liddle, for instance, explicitly took from Reich the insistence that, while capital was mobile, labour was not and companies would go to where the skilled labour was. (Mandelson and Liddle: 89-90). As early as 1994, Gordon Brown publicly announced that the onset of globalisation meant that the government needed to help supply a more skilled workforce to enjoy economic productivity. Brown stated that: "...the competitiveness of nations is now determined by the skills and talents of their citizens. In the modern economy where capital, raw materials and technology are internationally mobile and tradable worldwide it is people – their education and skills – that are increasingly the most important determinant of economic growth." (Brown, G, 'Introduction' in Blair, *New Britain*: 2).

[882] Domestically, it was prepared to raise national insurance payments and use some of the savings it had amassed in order to increase spending significantly.

[883] Driver and Martell: 2.

[884] Heffernan, *New Labour and Thatcherism*, citing Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An economic theory of democracy*. New York: Harper and Row. and Dunleavy, Patrick. 1991. *Democracy, bureaucracy and public choice : economic explanations in political science*. New York ; London: Harvester Wheatsheaf..

[885] The comprehensive overview provided by Held and his colleagues divides those debating political and economic globalisation into ideal types. One group adheres to the hyper-globalist thesis. Another group subscribes to the transformationalist thesis. While the separation Held and his fellow writers make between

view and that of the transformationalists – those that make no claims regarding globalisation's future direction. Indeed, part of the slippage of New Labour's approach to globalisation was to, at one and the same time, *explicitly* state that globalisation had happened, was inevitable and was following a set direction, while *implicitly* recognising that the process was indeterminate and still happening.[886] Thus, New Labour accepted implicitly that the process's future direction could be shaped.

How has this affected Labour's press policy? It shall be argued here that New Labour accepted a neo-liberal globalisation agenda, the logic of which would bring its views more in line with press business. Following on from what was indicated in the previous chapter, New Labour justified its policies as promoting international competitiveness. However, within that, there were choices as to how closely to align with the newspapers firms. The particularity of this alignment may be coincidence, but looks suspiciously like collaboration, where New Labour's understanding of representation was also a factor.

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the hyper-globalist and transformationalist thesis can be debated, there is a basic divide. This is between one that sees the end of the sovereign nation state and one which makes "...no claims about the future trajectory of globalization...". (Held, David. 1999. *Global transformations : politics, economics and culture*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press : 7, 3-10). Anthony Giddens was also a significant interpreter. (Giddens, Anthony. 1998. *The third way : the renewal of social democracy*. Malden, Mass. ; Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998.)

[886] Fairclough, for instance, quotes Blair as claiming that "... the driving force behind the policies associated with the Third Way is globalisation because no country is immune from the massive change that globalisation brings." (Fairclough: 27, quoting Blair, T., 'Facing the modern challenge: the third way in Britain and South Africa', 1999. Fairclough sees this as indicating that globalisation has been achieved. Yet, by using the verb 'brings', it both implies that it has happened and that it is still to happen. There are other examples of this, for instance Blair's Hayman Islands speech. (Blair, Tony, 'Speech to News Corp Leadership Conference, Hayman Islands, Australia, July 17 1995', in Blair, *New Britain*: 204). Within a broader attack on New Labour's critics with regard to globalisation, Anthony McGrew argues that the operation of the 'Third Way' was a challenge to the notion that New Labour operated within a hyper-globalist straitjacket. (McGrew, Anthony. 2004. 'Globalisation', in Plant, Raymond et. al. eds., *The Struggle for Labour's Soul*. London: Routledge: 137-162: 150-7).

Press and media strategy under Smith

This shift was not clear at the start of Smith's time in office. In the early part of Smith's reign, the policy on both press ownership and Labour representation in the press differed from the later Kinnock period. Under Kinnock, the pressure to increase Labour representation through a press and media strategy had led to a tension with the demands for press diversity. Instead, Smith shunned the more overt press manipulation techniques and, in the early period, his frontbench vigorously promoted the cause of press plurality and accountability.

The sea change in Labour's media relations and the techniques employed saw Smith banish many of Kinnock's key players from any effective influence. He also closed down the Shadow Communications Agency.[887] Why was this? The election failure did not help. Smith also had a personal animosity to Mandelson's coterie.[888] But the main reason was that the new leader was hostile to the media strategists' methods and their weighty influence.[889] In the period before his sudden death, Labour quietly used some of the

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[887] The prominent strategists included Mandelson, Philip Gould and Hewitt. (Worcester Robert, M., and Roger Mortimore. 1999. *Explaining Labour's landslide*. London: Politico's Publishing.: 88, Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 161-179, Jefferys, Kevin. 1999. *Leading Labour : from Keir Hardie to Tony Blair*. London: I.B.Tauris.: 204, Macintyre, Donald. 1999. *Mandelson : the biography*. London: HarperCollins.: 246-50, Routledge, Paul. 1999. *Mandy : the unauthorised biography of Peter Mandelson*. London: Simon & Schuster.: 137, 153, Sopel: 140, McSmith, Andy, 'John Smith 1992-1994' in Jefferys: 205. Sopel: 140. Davies, *Jerusalem*: 435). Mandelson was 'left kicking his heels', offered minor roles such as giving media advice to Smith's wife and running one by-election in Newbury in May 1993, where Labour's vote fell considerably. (Routledge: 139, 140, 146. Macintyre: 236, 248-9, Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 161-2). Phillip Gould fared little better, in his own words, left: "...out in the cold...", accurately perceived as "... the architect of a defeated and discredited campaign...". (Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 161-2. See also Macintyre: 246).

[888] He was said to have described Mandelson's then associate, Derek Draper, as "...that little bastard ...". (Routledge: 137, 147. See also McSmith, John Smith 1992-1994: 205).

[889] Observers, in the words of Smith's biographer, indicated that the leader's view of the 1992 defeat was that it was, in part, caused by an over-reliance "...on professional advice in preference to the political instincts of experienced politicians". (McSmith, John Smith 1992-1994: 205). See also Davies, who implicitly links Smith with the more traditional social democrats in the Labour Party. (Davies, *Jerusalem*: 435).

Clinton campaign's electoral techniques.[890] Yet, Smith publicly rejected what he called "...the black art of public relations".[891] He had an "... innate detestation of trickiness with the press".[892]

Thus, on this issue, he mostly sided with the traditionalists.[893] Although there was not complete symmetry, the battle between the 'modernisers' and the 'traditionalists' was intimately linked with perceptions of the media strategists' role. If there was the need for a completely new political approach to win over the press to broaden the party's support, then Labour needed the media strategists. If it could win without the Conservative newspapers' backing, then "...such people were surplus to requirements".[894]

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[890] Clinton campaigners worked for Labour on an important 1994 by-election. (Mike Jempson, Labour press officer for the 1994 Eastleigh by-election, interview with author, September 3 2002).

[891] He was quoted in 1993 as saying: "I don't like the black art of public relations that's taken over politics. We're talking about the government of the country – not the entertainment industry." (Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 105, also cited in Macintyre: 241). Jon Sopel indicates of the media strategists that there "...was a recognition by Smith that, in the name of Party unity, their presence would have been an unhelpful reminder of the *ancien régime*, and Neil Kinnock's more aggressive leadership style". (Sopel: 140).

[892] According to his director of communications David Hill. (Macintyre: 241).

[893] These more traditional social democrats had John Prescott as a leading figure. He launched a series of attacks on the image-makers. This was a key aspect of the battle being waged between the traditional social democrats and the new left, on the one side, and the 'modernisers' of the new right. (McSmith, *Playing*: 241-2, 246, McSmith, *John Smith*: 302-3). The more bizarre aspect of this was the personalised public spat with Mandelson, which reached its apogee when Prescott conducted a 'conversation' with a crab he christened 'Peter' at a photo call with reporters.

[894] "Clipping the wings of the image-makers was one way to slow down the advance of the modernizers."(McSmith, *John Smith*: 302-3). It is not as simple as to purely associate the press and media strategists with the 'modernisers'. For instance, the 'moderniser' MP Kim Howells, who Sopel wrongly describes as a traditionalist, in the period after the 1992 election, attacked the 'spin doctors' for the Sheffield rally and anodyne statements that were produced by the party in that election. (McSmith, *Playing*: 242, Sopel: 139.) However, a strong indication that there was a link came in the clash over Clintonisation. Hollick and Philip Gould were among those who went to the US to survey and write on the lessons of the Clinton campaign for Labour. (Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 175, 177, McSmith, *Playing*: 241). Brown and Blair went later. (Sopel: 140-6, Macintyre: 241, Anderson and Mann: 22). Gould's message from the US was that Labour should further centralise its organisation - especially its political communications, as it was to do under Blair. Hollick announced that there was a need for a 'new Labour Party', in part characterised by revising the trade union links. (Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 175-177).

Press and Cross-Media Ownership under Smith

At first, the Labour frontbench team also rejected the message of MPs wanting a press business rapprochement. Smith appointed the soft left stalwart Clwyd as Shadow Heritage Secretary in November 1992. Her duties included press policy. He was aware of the former journalist's involvement as a press and media campaigner and that she championed the right of reply, which she continued to support. Under her, Labour press policy limited itself to the same targets as the later Kinnock years. Yet, she employed a radical public zeal, notably with regard to News International and News Corporation, which associated the policy more with the remnants of the Labour new left. Although, by this stage, others in the party had little input in policy development, an indication of the direction taken was that Clwyd brought in the CPBF's Mike Jempson, as an adviser.[895] She clashed with Jempson on policy.[896] Yet, she was close to the CPBF.[897]

The Shadow Heritage Minister followed conference policy in rejecting calls to weaken the cross-media ownership rules. If anything, she intended them to be strengthened to challenge oligopoly – a market failure that needed government action to correct. In February 1993, Clwyd publicly told the Government to take action against News Corporation's "...totally unacceptable concentration of media ownership...".[898] She renewed calls to hold an inquiry by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission into press

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[895] Mike Jempson, interview with author, September 3 2002, Granville Williams interview, Freedman, 2000: 227-8, Freedman, 2003: 160.

[896] He believed that Clwyd "...was nervous about the brief..." and he felt other MPs around her were "...building an atmosphere of paranoia, at the time". (Mike Jempson, interview with author, September 3 2002). A member of her ministerial team, now Lord Corbett put it more forcefully: "She was the worst person that I have ever worked with in frontbench jobs, absolutely the worst, did not trust you, kept interfering – a busybody. It was: 'Who were you seeing, what were you up to, who said what, why did you say it, what did they say?' and all that bloody rubbish." (Corbett interview).

[897] "Ann Clwyd actually did relate to the campaign. She was one of those Labour MPs that knew us and trusted us. And therefore ... in shadow office she also relied on us, as a ... think tank...". (Granville Williams interview, June 14 2002). As Jempson put it: "We quite liked the idea of having her, because she was a very tigerish sort of politician ...". (Mike Jempson, interview with author, September 3 2002).

[898] HOC February 22 1993, col. 668., Anon., 'Brooke rejects media complaint', *Financial Times*, February 23 1993.

ownership and cross ownership, targeting News Corporation's "insidious monopoly...of opinion" later that year.[899]

In this earlier period of Smith's leadership, in stark contrast to the situation under Blair, Labour regarded media economic globalisation as a development that could and should be challenged.[900] So, Clwyd slammed "the globetrotter", after Murdoch publicly boasted that technologically-determined globalisation would let him overwhelm national media regulations.[901]

Thoroughly modern Mowlam

However, those associated with the modernisers fought back. They were aware of Smith's hostility to their conception of how to gain Labour representation in the press. They targeted media ownership liberalisation. Clwyd's attacks on News Corporation had prompted a strong repost in one of its newspapers, the *Sunday Times*. Its political editor had arrogantly counselled Smith to not follow Kinnock's 'mistake' "...in involving his party in a commercial tussle well outside its orbit". Tellingly, he contrasted Clwyd's view with the "...struggle for modernity...".[902]

Little noticed by other writers, Peter Mandelson, languishing in obscurity on the backbenches, had put out earlier feelers towards this new policy direction. He demanded a broadcasting ownership review in a Commons debate he initiated in July 1983.

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[899] HOC June 10 1993, col. 474, Ivor Owen, 'Labour pledge on press ownership', *Financial Times*, June 11 1993. See also Raymond Snoddy, 'Newspaper price war stepped up by Murdoch', *Financial Times*, September 2 1993. She wrote in the *Daily Mirror* that his ownership concentration undermined "...free expression of the different points of view in society". (Clwyd, Ann. 1993. 'He's used his power to evade controls that governments might place on him', *Daily Mirror*, September 3 1993).

[900] When this notion was suggested to Lord Corbett, despite his antagonism to Clwyd, he readily agreed this was the case. (Corbett interview).

[901] She vowed to use the law to divest his newspaper and satellite holdings after previously promising that the News Corporation mogul "...must and will be stopped...". (Culf, Andrew. 1993. 'Murdoch claims his technology will conquer national media laws', October 13 1993, Culf, Andrew. 1993. 'Clwyd attacks Tory line on broadcasting', *The Guardian*, September 27 1993). See also Freedman, 2000: 227, Freedman, 2003: 161.

[902] Blair, it was said, needed to unburden himself of "...the left-wing's obsession with yesterday's lost arguments". (Jones, Michael. 1993. 'Labour in a silly spin over satellite success', *Sunday Times*, September 5 1993).

Contrary to party policy, he entertained the notion that this could consider further deregulation.[903]

Following this, Clwyd lost her place as a shadow minister. She failed to gain sufficient MP support in the elections still taking place to decide Shadow Cabinet places.[904] A moderniser replaced her, in a move that replicated the other shifts towards a more pro-business neo-liberal agenda – although it is not clear that Smith knew the direction she would take party policy. The party leader installed Mowlam in the Shadow Heritage post in October 1993. Mowlam, like Clwyd, was from the soft left tradition, but now closely aligned herself with the new right.[905]

The provisional outline of a new pattern started emerging fully six months before Blair's assumption of the leadership. Two interrelated pressures on Labour would be accommodated.[906] The policies to achieve this would be developed after the new right gained power over all aspects of press strategy. The Labour frontbench would vie with the Conservatives to outdo each other in arguing for liberalisation, as part of an emerging accommodation to a globalisation notion and a Tory paradigm. Within this framework, Mowlam, as a former key player in Smith's business-friendly Prawn Cocktail offensive, particularly attempted to ingratiate the party with a series of media conglomerates, of which News Corporation was just the most prominent. As Lord Corbett put it to the author: "Along comes Mo and Mo wants to tear it all up and start again... We have to

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[903] HOC July 8 1993, col. 568.

[904] Ironically, for what was to happen, Lord Corbett, suggests this was because she failed to get sufficient support of *left* MPs. He emphasised that her position on media policy had little to do with this. He said: "In the Shadow Cabinet election there are all these slates running and you get on the Campaign Group slate or the Tribune slate ... In an ideal world you get on both, and those alliances kept shifting and they shifted in a way that kept her off for two or three years, and then she got back on." Corbett thought John Smith had little involvement in drawing up the policy she was espousing: "I don't think that John was there long enough there to get a grip on it, and I am not sure how much he would have listened to her anyway. I am absolutely certain that he was not the happiest bunny when she turned up in the Shadow Cabinet." (Corbett interview).

[905] In the months to come, she would become a part of the Blair leadership election team. (Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 202).

[906] One then Labour adviser regards the sea change as coming in 1994. (Mowlam advisor Jean Seaton interviewed by Nicholas Jones (Nicholas Jones, personal notes)). Yet, the new policy was already being publicly considered the year before.

stop being old fashioned, and childish...Minimum regulation and that is all we are about...".[907]

The influential future Culture, Media and Sport select committee chair, Gerald Kaufman, who wanted market domination of the media, particularly pushed the Labour frontbench towards this. He invoked globalisation and/or international competitiveness as the justification.[908] Labour still mentioned the role of a diverse press in maintaining democratic debate and discourse as a concern. But Labour by then rarely acted upon this.

Mowlam's determination to start anew made the shift more abrupt, according to her deputy shadow minister, now Lord Corbett.[909] The poor communication between successive Labour spokespeople was another factor. They did not pass on information on policy initiatives, according to another insider.[910] This haphazard attitude was again indicative of the relatively low importance placed on press and media policy.

In November 1993, Mowlam first called for deregulation after facing concerted demands from press companies that globalisation had left national regulations outmoded.[911] Rather than opposing a Government review to consider deregulation, Mowlam took up the modernisers' cudgel to battle to shift Labour's policy, so as to accept this new 'reality'. At this stage, under Smith, she was mindful that the change of party policy had not fully occurred. Yet with this shift, came a change from Clwyd's view of globalisation. Instead of seeing it as a process that should and could be challenged, Mowlam reflected the New

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[907] Corbett interview.

[908] *Ibid.* See, for instance, Kaufman, Gerald. 1995. 'A word in you receiver dish', *Guardian*, July 12 1995, Gerald Kaufman, 'We can't wait any longer to map the digital mediascape', *New Statesman*, April 3 1998.

[909] "There is a bit of Mo that likes to shock and I don't say that critically at all, and she is very much a sort of 'why' person. You know, 'why is this is where we are ... and lets look at this and start again',". (Corbett interview).

[910] As Mike Jempson put it: "The most interesting thing for me, which I must admit came as a real shock, because I kind of assumed that machine politics had some rigour and some system, was that each successive shadow ... whatever they did never got passed on to the next person...I think what was confusing to people who had been advisors was that they kind of assumed that there was a continuity to the advice." This was, for instance, his experience in the detailed work he had done regarding Labour policy's with regard to the BBC. (Mike Jempson, interview with author, September 3 2002).

[911] In this instance, the regulations related to broadcasting and ITV ownership and it was the Conservative government that had announced a review to consider liberalisation. The justification for this review would be one that would be regularly invoked by the Labour leadership. That is that the press and media firms had to expand in order to compete in the world market.

Labour language indicated by Fairclough, following Marx's critique. With this, the market became a reified subject, rather than a human creation that could be regulated by government.[912]

The Shadow Heritage Secretary's new line soon extended to calling for increased cross-media ownership. Once the Government review was in place in January 1994, the discussion switched to newspaper ownership in broadcasting. The Conservative 1990 Broadcasting Act had responded to concerns about cross-ownership by introducing rules so that no newspaper proprietor could own more than 20% of a terrestrial TV station.[913] Labour had then opposed this move, as representing a "...dangerous concentration..." of ownership.[914]

However, newspaper businesses, through The British Media Industry Group, had been campaigning for the law to be changed. Along with successfully lobbying the Conservative government, the BMIG also used the review to lobby Labour.[915] It used the language of an all-conquering globalisation and a multimedia revolution to argue that it needed greater access to TV ownership to expand in order to survive. The companies saw it as unfair that Murdoch could indulge in satellite TV cross-ownership, but they could not do likewise with terrestrial television.[916]

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[912] Thus, she told one newspaper: "My personal view is that politicians are not keeping up to speed with changes in the market place. My personal view is that we should have a change of policy. The reality is that we haven't." (Wynn Davies, Patricia. 1993. 'Labour attacked over TV 'sell-out'', *Independent*, November 26 1993, Nisse, Jason. 1993. 'Foreign firms plan ITV bids: French group stalks LWT as ownership rules are eased', *Independent on Sunday*, November 28 1993, Nisse, Jason. 1993. 'Brooke to allow large television companies to merge' *Independent on Sunday*, November 28 1993).

[913] See, for instance, Great Britain Department of National Heritage. 1995. *Media ownership : the Government's proposals*. London: HMSO.: 10, Goodwin, *Television*: 143.

[914] Department of National Heritage: 10, HOC April 24 1991.

[915] The BMIG was also very influential in the Conservative government's liberalisation shift. Its members were the main beneficiaries. (Doyle, *Media ownership*: 94-5). The BMIG included the Pearson Group (involved with the *Financial Times*), Associated Newspapers (The *Daily Mail* and *Mail on Sunday*), the Guardian Media Group and the *Telegraph*.

[916] As the managing director of the Pearson Group, Frank Barlow, put it: "Canal owners didn't end up owning railways, or railway owners running airlines: they went out of business. That's what this legislation will do to publishers unless it is changed." (Barlow, Frank. 1994. 'Expansion or bust', *Independent*, January 12 1994). Goodwin has effectively dismissed the BMIG's claims that its demands for increased cross-ownership were a response to a new multimedia environment (Goodwin, *Television*). Another problem was with the argument of financial survival. The difficulty was that the official industry statistics did not indicate this. They showed that television's share of advertising had stayed at the same level over

Yet, along with the danger to diversity, cross-ownership potentially threatened public service broadcasting and led to cross promotion.[917] Commercial television's takeover by proprietors who were used to influencing the political direction of reporting and by editorial staff schooled in this tradition would, at least, provide a potential challenge to ITV's practice of 'balance'.

Under the combined pressure of the Conservative's influence on the political climate, the new understanding of globalisation and the newspaper businesses demands that this dictated a fresh course, Mowlam caved in.

At first, the shadow minister indicated that she feared that a deal would be struck between the Conservatives and press businesses to end the 20% rule.[918] Within days, as if to pre-empt this, *she* made those fears a reality for Labour. Without reference to any agreed Labour conference policy, she decided that the 20% rule was "...irrational..." and had to be changed. At first, she indicated that she did not know what percentage it should be replaced by. An indication that her new understanding did not automatically dictate a new path was that she disputed the claims that media groups needed to be bigger to compete internationally.[919] However, her scepticism about expansion soon faded.

The party leadership further advanced its business-friendly neo-liberal deregulatory approach at the 21st Century Media Conference, presided over by Mowlam in July 1994 –

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the previous ten years. (Brown, Maggie and Michael Leapman, 'Let the feeding frenzy commence', *Independent*, January 12 1994, Trades Union Congress. Annual, Conference. 1994. *Report of the 126th annual Trades Union Congress*. London: T.U.C.: 301).

[917] This was one reason that, even under the Conservatives, cross-ownership legislation, impinging as it did on the more interventionist broadcasting law, went beyond the competition law applying to other industries. As we have seen before, the traditionally editorially partial positions taken by the press contrasted with public service imposition of 'impartiality' when it came to news reporting. It should also be remembered that the extent to which public service broadcasters have maintained a sense of balance, particularly with regard to labour movement reporting, has been questioned, particularly by the work of the Glasgow Media Group. (Beharrell, Peter, and Group University of Glasgow Media. 1976. *Bad news*. London ; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul., Beharrell, Peter, and Group Glasgow University Media. 1980. *More bad news*. London ; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.).

[918] Brown, Maggie. 'Giant media groups on the way', *Independent*, January 4 1993, Snoddy, Raymond. 1993. 'Media review aims to boost UK ownership overseas', *Financial Times*, January 4 1993.

[919] Mowlam, Marjorie. 1994. 'Labour's Watching Brief', *Independent*, January 12 1994.

before Blair became leader. Media campaigners had originally suggested this event. Yet, rather than organising a party gathering to which outside speakers would be invited, which would reflect Labour's traditional alliances in media reform, Mowlam organised a conference for media business to tell the Labour leadership what it should do. A participant from one of Labour's traditional allies considered that it represented "...the very clear statement that New Labour was going onto a corporate media agenda".[920] A more surprisingly blunt assessment of its role comes from Mowlam's deputy, Corbett. He said: "We had a great bloody conference...which some media moguls paid for... And that was it really. It just went out of the door after that...".[921]

When the author questioned Mowlam, she denied that she had wanted to loosen the ownership rules.[922] However, the facts speak for themselves. Mowlam had taken on board the liberalising message from the newspaper owners, reiterated at the conference.[923] Before and at the event she argued that "...some loosening of cross-media restrictions..." was "...inevitable...".[924]

Mowlam also told the author: "I was doing nothing to add to Murdoch's strength. It was the furthest thing from my mind."[925] Yet, again the reality was different.[926] As we have

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[920] "In other words, it was an exclusive business thing... This is about a relationship to the media where 'we start to minimise the flack and start talking business friendly'." (Granville Williams interview). Among those involved were the BMIG and News International, cable companies and the privatised BT. (Goodwin, *Television*: 146, Freedman, 2000: 230, Freedman, 2003: 163). Although the press and media strategists were not seen to be involved in these developments, a key ally was. Lord Hollick, a central figure in the election campaign also an important Labour link to the media corporations, had recently attacked the existing cross-ownership rules. (Freedman, 2003: 161-2).

[921] Nevertheless, it should be noted that Lord Corbett approvingly spoke of the policy of listening to media business interests and stopping "...going out of our way to find specific interest groups to upset. Because this did not have a good effect when the vote came to be counted." (Corbett interview).

[922] Mo Mowlam, questioned by the author at the launch meeting for her book, *Momentum*, in Brighton on May 6 2002. Also, she was offended at such suggestions from campaigners for diversity when she was shadow secretary, according to one witness. She said that she had not done 'anything wrong'. (Granville Williams interview).

[923] At the conference, Guardian Media Group's chair, Harry Roche reiterated the BMIG line that the 20% rule should go. The justification was to aid international competitiveness, so that newspaper publishers "...would be able to make the proper contribution to the investment required in Britain...". (Maggie Brown, 'Rule change urged on media ownership', *Independent*, July 14 1994).

[924] Henry, Georgina. 1994. 'Balancing act on a see-saw', *The Guardian*, June 27 1994. See also TUC 1994: 389, O'Malley and Soley: 94.

[925] Mowlam in Brighton.

seen, the loosened cross ownership rules would aid News Corporation and BMIG. This was because the regulations barred them from having a stake in terrestrial TV, which analysts increasingly saw them as craving.[927] It was certainly the case, by this stage, that Clywd's commitment to challenge News Corporation's existing ownership had evaporated.[928] Labour's former bogeyman, along with other media businesses, was starting to be accommodated. A conference witness says a News Corporation representative even thanked the organisers for the opportunity to influence party policy.[929] By that time, seemingly high-spending media conglomerate lobbyists had Labour's ear. Jempson views it that: "She may well not have realised it, but ...the significant thing, I suppose, was that it [Labour] was saying 'we're listening to you'."[930]

Again, as with other areas, at the time, Mowlam invoked globalisation as a justification for deregulation. She had earlier indicated that she regarded this as part of as an unstoppable 'media revolution'. Again similar to the wider thinking, she also viewed that it could be managed in order to bring benefits.[931]

Nonetheless, nothing was decided formally at this stage. The Labour movement strongly opposed this new line. However, the leadership ignored it and flouted its decisions. The TUC and socialists outside the Labour Party rejected the new trajectory, as has been

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[926] One leading press activist dismissed the view Mowlam expressed to this work's author as "...just wish-fulfilment". (Granville Williams interview). What is striking is how little Langdon's sympathetic biography deals with this important period of Mowlam's time as a politician. Equally, little is mentioned in Mowlam's autobiography, save that she says that she met many media executives who would help her later on in her career. (Langdon, Julia. 2000. *Mo Mowlam*. London: Little, Brown & Company., Mowlam, Marjorie. 2002. *Momentum : the struggle for peace, politics and the people*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2002.) After questioning Mowlam, one gets the impression that this period is a closed book, which she is reluctant to reopen.

[927] See, for instance, Barnett, Steven. 2002. 'Bill throws broadcast up in air', *The Observer*, May 5 2002 and Doward, Jamie. 2002. ' How far can Blair go before Murdoch hits back?', *The Observer*, May 5 2002.

[928] See, for instance, Leader, 'A place in the Sun for Blair?', *Independent*, August 10 1994.

[929] Mike Jempson, interview with author, September 3 2002, Freedman, 2000: 230.

[930] "It was really a shift from 'we have got something to say, you must listen'. And the amount of money that was being spent lobbying then, I think, was extraordinary." (Mike Jempson, interview with author, September 3 2002). Lord Corbett confirmed the lobbyists' involvement, saying: "Mo ran a very open door policy and that was fine." (Corbett interview).

[931] In arguing for this, she also used the 'Third Way' rhetorical device of appearing to provide an alternative to two unsavoury positions. She indicated that her view was opposed to both Kaufman's and to the traditional Labour approach, which she characterised as the "'We know what's best for people' one, let's keep things as they are" position. (Henry, Georgina. 1994. 'Balancing act on a see-saw', *The Guardian*, June 27 1994).

noted by Freedman.[932] A section of Labour MPs, including Mullin, Clwyd and Dennis MacShane, took the same view when they brought the Media (Diversity) Bill to the Commons in January 1995, as indicated by Humphreys.[933]

What other accounts have downplayed was that the 1994 Labour Party conference also opposed the new line. The first conference with Tony Blair as leader overwhelmingly backed a motion calling for the party to oppose any moves to further deregulate the media industry.[934] A succession of speakers called on Labour to go further and commit to diversifying the oligopolistic press; "...proper newspaper regulation...to break up the monopolies...", as one delegate put it. Mowlam dutifully pledged to the conference to act

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[932] Freedman, 2000: 232-4. The TUC congress criticised Mowlam, agreeing that the relaxation of rules "...would lead to further concentration of media ownership and power which already distorts the newspaper and publishing industry in the United Kingdom." It was agreed that the TUC general council should work with the media unions and the CPBF to campaign against relaxing the rules. The TUC went further to vow to campaign for measures to limit newspaper ownership and cross-media ownership by individual firms and to "...reverse the unhealthy concentration...", although it was not specific as to what this would entail. Tony Burke, of the printers union, the GPMU, was only one of a number of senior media union trade unionists to attack Mowlam's "...disastrous..." plans to further loosen the "...very few effective restrictions on media ownership in the UK...". The union leaders were particularly scathing about Labour's new rapprochement with News International. Burke warned Blair, who was then soon to be installed as leader: "Beware of Aussies bearing gifts because there will he a very high price to pay for Murdoch's support. This Faustian pact will lead to eventual disaster for Labour ...". The NUJ's general secretary John Foster condemned the liberalisation as leading to a situation where "...fewer and fewer owners will gain editorial control". (TUC 1994: 389-91, Freedman, 2000: 230).

[933] These again faced the problem that they would have restricted ownership rather than providing for new titles. Moreover, they placed limits on foreign ownership that would have faced the same problems identified in the previous chapter, although they were by no means either as nationalistic or draconian as those the party leadership advocated, even if their main target would be similar. Nonetheless, if such a Bill had been enacted, it would have made possible a significant step towards press diversity, at least. In contrast to Mowlam's position, and in line with the sentiments of the recently-passed party policy and the social democratic tradition, Labour MP Mullin introduced the Media (Diversity) Bill to the Commons, under the ten minute rule, in January 1995. Clwyd, Dennis MacShane and other Labour MPs supported it. It aimed to enforce press diversity by barring any national newspaper proprietor from owning more than one daily or Sunday title. In an example of policy transfer, which went beyond the US policy, which was its inspiration, the Bill barred any non-EC citizen from possessing more than 20% of a company that owned a national newspaper or TV station. It would also change the law so that satellite operations would be governed by the same rules as terrestrial television. On cross-ownership, this would mean that no firm with a controlling interest in satellite or terrestrial television could own more than 20% of a national newspaper, which would have led to News Corporation having to sell part of its empire. (HOC, January 11 1995, col. 153-6. See also Humphreys, Peter. 2000. 'New Labour policies for the media and the arts' Pp. 221-239 in *New labour in power*, edited by Augustine Lawler Peter and David Coates. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.: 228). There was an additional problem in that there was no provision for supporting the divested titles. As we shall see later, in a depressed market, newspapers like the *Independent* were to be baled out while facing a bitter price war by the *Times*. Thus, such a bid for press diversity would have to have been backed up with measures to sustain the divested newspapers. Otherwise, it would have led to titles going to the wall.

[934] Porter, Henry. 'Murdoch: The Wooing Game', *The Guardian*, September 26 1994.

against further deregulation – and then the Labour frontbench promptly ignored her commitment.[935]

ENTER TONY BLAIR: GLOBALISATION SHAPED BY REPRESENTATION

The tide was turning further away from the conference position. With Blair's arrival, press ownership policy could be fully developed along the modernisers' lines. As we shall see, there was a determination to go along with the globalisation grain. Labour also developed its strategies for gaining representation in the press and media. Neither was the globalisation strategy nor that concerning representation dictated by the other. However, the first enhanced the second. There is a suspicious coincidence of these two strategies. We shall also see that there are some indications that the representation strategy and the agency of the newspaper businesses shaped how New Labour treated the imperative to go with the grain of globalisation in press policy.

The connections with the press businesses look suspiciously like collaboration in this context. Nevertheless, this work will argue that, in seeking to get press support, and particularly that of News Corporation, there was no need for a formal 'pact'. Instead, insiders describe the understanding between Blair and News Corporation. The organisation was well aware of Labour's policy shifts and had been involved in discussions on them.

Thus, the tension between diversity and Labour representation was by now reaching breaking point. Those formulating Labour policy were aware that wooing newspaper businesses and, in the process, advocating rules that even *reduced* media diversity would advance the goal of Labour representation.[936] Also, Labour's bid to increase its representation in the press could benefit from Labour's economic policy shift. Labour

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[935] Rudd, Roland. 1994. 'The Labour Party in Blackpool: Tougher line on media urged', *Financial Times*, October 8 1994.

[936] Like for the most part under Kinnock, the relationship between the two is not discussed much by Labour insiders. For instance, as we indicated in the last chapter, the role of the press businesses is little discussed by Philip Gould. In fact, business generally is little discussed in the book. It only is alluded to tangentially when the market economy is discussed or when he indicates that there is a need for a competitive Britain. (Gould, *The unfinished revolution*).

operated within a framework reset by neo-liberalism, as we indicated earlier. In such a climate, support for Blair did not have the dangers of the past for the hierarchies of traditionally Conservative newspapers.

In this, as with other areas, as we have seen, Smith was the aberration.[937] The latter part of the Smith era was not out of sync with regard to press ownership. Yet, under Blair, the press strategy's *two* aspects were much more clearly accordant. New Labour emphasised representation rather than diversity, building on the momentum of the later Kinnock years. As we shall see in Appendix 1 to this chapter, this representation strategy had some similarities to that under Kinnock, although there were particular differences, with regard to the tabloid press and News Corporation. This representation strategy was extraordinarily successful, before the cracks started to appear.

The unions underwent a similar process. By now, as we have noted, no other agency inside Labour aside from the leadership had much influence on party policy. Although New Labour greatly froze the TUC out of policy development, the little pressure which the unions could have placed on the leadership on press diversity was repeatedly not exercised – a point which has been underplayed.[938] The TUC had pulled back in campaigning to challenge press ownership policy. One key reason for this was that the TUC paralleled the party in concentrating on getting better representation for itself, rather than by following the media unions' pleas to concentrate on attempting to increase diversity, as shall be considered further in Appendix 1 of this chapter.

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[937] As Charles Clarke put it: "Tony Blair was the linear descendant of Neil Kinnock as a modernising Labour leader. John Smith was not." (Interview with Clarke, in Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 178).

[938] An indication of the distance that Blair wanted to be seen to make between himself and the trade union leadership was given by the senior broadcaster Nicholas Jones to the author. He said: "If you want to find a picture of Blair with union leaders, you will not be able to find it. They don't exist. You know when he does not come out and stand with them on the steps of Downing Street – he knows that that would be a disaster. You can see him walking down the steps with John Monks into the TUC dinner, but they will never ever allow us access, so you cannot ever see Blair in a smoke-filled room with trade union leaders." (Nicholas Jones, interview with author, August 30 2002).

Labour Representation: Meeting Mr Murdoch

We shall assess the impact of globalisation on press policy in detail in the course of this chapter. Firstly, however, we need to consider the question: Why did the Conservative newspapers, particularly News Corporation's, soften their support for the Conservatives and edge closer to Labour? Martin Linton and the former *Marxism Today* editor Martin Jacques have argued that class dealignment caused this.[939] This argument, similar to that New Labour used to explain the party's previous electoral defeats, would have had more validity if the press organisations had not been at the same time engaging in crude 'class war' tactics in derecognising the main journalist union.[940]

A more convincing explanation is that New Labour consciously wooed those newspapers, as part of a bid for representation, which was reciprocated. Why it was particularly considered that the News Corporation tabloids were important will be outlined in the first appendix to this chapter. Other methods for achieving representation through structural change of the press were part of a past to which New Labour did not wish to return. Such policies were out of kilter with its attempt to go with the grain of globalisation and also the tenor of EU media policies. The shift in Labour's stance on newspaper and media ownership had the advantage of making Labour more amenable to press business interests.

McNair and Freedman are among those who recognise this latter point, with regard to Murdoch, and suggest that both sides would gain from deepening their relationship. But they do not extensively develop this point.[941] So, how, specifically, was New Labour able to get Murdoch's support? Colin Seymour-Ure suggests that Murdoch's motives to support Blair can only be inferred, with regard to media policy.[942] It cannot be proved

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[939] Linton interview. This is an argument McNair cites and accepts. (McNair, Brian. 1999. *Journalism and democracy : an evaluation of the political public sphere*. London: Routledge, 1999.: 149-50).
[940] For examples of this, see NUJ magazine *Journalist.*
[941] McNair, *Journalism and democracy*: 150, Freedman, 2000: 224-5, Freedman, 2003: 158-9.
[942] Seymour-Ure, Colin. 1997. 'Editorial Opinion in the National Press' in *Britain votes 1997*, edited by Pippa Norris and T. Gavin Neil. Oxford: Oxford University Press in association with the Hansard Society for Parliamentary Government.: 78-100: 84. Yet, he starkly notes, in relation to Murdoch that: "In one

unambiguously, certainly. However, by primarily using two insider sources, one a diary previously relatively little noted, we can attempt to piece together at least a preliminary answer to this question.[943]

A combination of circumstances brought them together, it appears, as both a political as well as a business decision. From insider accounts it appears that Murdoch is a deeply political right-winger who wishes to advance such an agenda, but will adjust his tactics in doing this, constrained by his business interests.[944] Murdoch had shown himself to be tactically adroit. He had let some of his papers support a British Labour government in the 1970s and the Australian Labour Party – before withdrawing support to both.[945] On this occasion, Murdoch became hostile to the Conservative leadership, while the Labour leadership's overall policy positions were closer to Murdoch's than at any time previously. The Labour hierarchy was willing to relax media legislation to Murdoch's advantage, among others. It progressively looked more likely to win and thus it was also to Murdoch's business advantage to support Labour.

In order to understand this development, we should quickly consider the Major government's relationship with Murdoch. At first, insider accounts suggest, it was less that Murdoch was attracted to Blair but more that the Tories under Major disillusioned him – while he could work with Blair. He had told close confidants that he was now "...dead against..." Major, seeing him as "...useless and finished..."[946] The newspaper that the then *Sunday Times* editor Andrew Neil described as 'Murdoch's mouthpiece'

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political field today's media baron does have an interest which is direct and fundamental: media policy." (Seymour-Ure, *Prime ministers*: 113).

[943] Wyatt, Neil, Andrew. 1997. *Full disclosure*. London: Pan Books. The Neil book was poured over, not least by other journalists. Lord Wyatt's diaries were either rather dismissed or ignored. See Chapter 2 for a discussion on the validity of this particular source.

[944] Neil, Wyatt.

[945] As he told one interviewer: "There is no point either in sucking up to politicians. What is important is to make sure that you have covered political bases." (Brooks, Richard. 1998. 'Love, marriage and the real Rupert Murdoch', *The Observer*, November 8 1998). According to a senior NUJ official: "Murdoch deals with whoever is in power, and this even goes as far as his employment policies. All Murdoch's papers in Australia are union closed shops and Murdoch negotiated with the unions quite happily. Murdoch deals with existing power ...". (Gopsill interview).

[946] This emerges from Wyatt's journals. This assessment is all the more striking because Murdoch revealed it to Wyatt, who he knew was a close confidant of the then Prime Minister. (Wyatt: 442, see also 105, 324-5, 443. See also Neil: 569).

made clear its opposition.[947] As early as January 1994, a *Sun* editorial had bitterly attacked the Major leadership wailing: "What fools we were to believe this lot."[948]

As importantly, the feeling was mutual. Like another Conservative premier before him, Major had felt the newspapers' wrath. He felt the Conservatives' traditional press allies had turned against him from the time of the ERM debacle in 1992.[949] He also hated press intrusion.[950] What is more, according to his confidant, he had specific reasons for this hostility, to do with his personal life.[951] Lord Wyatt says this prompted Major to privately vow to him: "If I had a majority of a hundred and fifty, I would crush Rupert Murdoch."[952] This hostility seems to have extended to members of his Cabinet.[953]

This may have been an idle threat, but Major did consider ways of reducing Murdoch's power. He also made sure that those close to Murdoch knew he was considering this.[954] His Conservative predecessor Stanley Baldwin, with the help of his scriptwriter and cousin-in-law, Rudyard Kipling, had famously railed against those who had 'power without responsibility'.[955] Major responded by contemplating legislating in a way that the

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[947] As for proprietorial interference in its editorial line, its former chief leader writer commented that: "In the case of the *Sun*, the decisive voice has always been that of Mr Murdoch." (Spark, Ronald. 1997. 'It was Rupert Murdoch wot done it', *Daily Telegraph*, March 19 1997).

[948] Quoted in McKie, David. 1998. "Clingers, Waverers, Quavers: The Tabloid Press in the 1997 Election." in *Political communications : why Labour won the general election of 1997*, edited by Ivor Crewe, Brian Gosschalk, and John Bartle. London: Frank Cass, 1998.: 117.

[949] The *Sun* had led most of the Conservative press in backing Redwood against Major in the 1995 leadership contest. (*Ibid.*: 115-130, esp., 117. Norris, Pippa. 1998. "The Battle for the Campaign Agenda." in *New Labour triumphs : Britain at the polls*, edited by Anthony Stephen King. Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House., Junor, Penny. 1993. *The Major enigma*. London: Michael Joseph, 1993.: 302). For instance, *Sun* editor Kelvin McKenzie had famously told Major in the immediate aftermath of the ERM debacle that he had "...a large bucket of shit on my desk and tomorrow I'm going to pour it all over your head". This story is retold in Neil: 10-11.

[950] According to his biographer, before becoming PM: "...he had enjoyed a favourable press for the most part and had built up no immunity". (Junor: 216).

[951] It was said that he had discovered that the *Sun* had spent vast sums in the early 1990s renting an apartment near a house where it thought he had a girlfriend, in order to spy on his movements. He also was furious at the way a Murdoch paper had exposed an affair his son James had had with his superior at work. (Wyatt :163). We now know that Major had conducted an affair with a Conservative colleague in 1980s. (Currie, Edwina. 2002. 'I chose my lover too well', *The Times*, September 30 2002).

[952] He was quoted as adding: "It's the reason why no decent people want to go into public life these days. If they can't get something on him, they get it on his family." (Wyatt: 481. See also p. 511 and p. 602).

[953] Major was said to have told Wyatt: "It would have been much worse if the others had had their way in the Cabinet. They want to close some of his newspapers immediately." (Wyatt: 514).

[954] *Ibid.*: 162.

[955] Curran and Seaton.

Labour leadership had shied away from. Major considered bringing in the sort of law the Labour Party had supported in its radical but nationalistic phase – a nationality clause for the ownership of titles.[956] His and Murdoch's mutual antagonism was exemplified and amplified by the proposals for newspaper owners and cross-ownership contained in the Conservative government's Broadcasting Bill.

Globalisation shaped by representation: The Broadcasting Bill and Labour

Following lobbying from the BMIG, the Conservative government announced in 1995 that it would liberalise cross-ownership rules to bring it more in line with general competition policy. Yet, this would be achieved in a way which would exclude News Corporation and the Mirror Group. The Government had justified this move in terms of the inevitable rush of technologically-determined globalisation and convergence.[957] In a significant departure from Labour's previous positions, but in the framework of Labour's globalisation analysis, the Labour frontbench turned its back on the party's conference policy and followed suit.

The shift in Labour's policy, which Mowlam had considered under John Smith's leadership, now became a reality under Blair's New Labour opposition. Despite the rhetoric, New Labour seemed little concerned that the *rights* of the press firms to oversee the promulgation of ideas with few controls came with *responsibilities*. Instead, Chris Smith having taken over from Mowlam as Shadow Heritage Secretary, agreed with the Conservative government's 1995 White Paper, which opened the way for newspaper

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[956] Wyatt: 481. See also p. 511 and p. 602.

[957] Great Britain Department of National, Heritage. 1995. *Media ownership : the Government's proposals*. London: HMSO, 1995.: esp.: 7, 15. Rather than considering that ownership was key in gauging diversity, the Conservatives placed more emphasis on audience share in its measurements. Moreover, calculations of audience shares in various systems advocated measured audience share in various media differently, leading to hugely divergent conclusions. The BMIG's calculations, for instance were denounced as a lobbying tactic, which was necessarily arbitrary and subjective in its weighting. The BMIG also downplayed the difference in ownership systems, by equating, for instance, a publicly-owned BBC – bound by impartiality laws, with Associated Newspapers – publishers of the passionately polemical *Daily Mail*. (Collins and Murroni: 70, Goodwin, *Television*: 147-8, Barnett, Steven. 1995. 'More noise, fewer voices – Powerful vested interests must not dictate who owns the media', *Independent*, March 27 1995).

groups with under 20% of national newspaper circulation to wholly own as many television channels as they wanted – up to 15% of the entire television market.

Yet, this legislation left News Corporation out in the cold. The Conservative plans left the majority of newspaper groups in the BMIG able to spread into television. However, News Corporation and the Mirror Group could not expand into terrestrial TV, because of their newspaper holdings' size. Murdoch made clear his "...furious rage..." at even this minimal constraint.[958] An insider account indicates that Murdoch was also influenced to support Blair because the Major government was investigating News Corporation digibox monopolisation. Despite lobbying from Murdoch personally and others, Major refused to budge. He was said to have revealed: "It would have been much worse if the others had had their way in the Cabinet. They want to close some of his newspapers immediately."[959]

Blair and his coterie had had meetings with Murdoch on his trips to London, as insiders have revealed.[960] Yet, this rapprochement's most visible illustration was Blair's attendance at the News Corporation's Leadership Conference on the Hayman Islands in July 1995.[961] In this, the parallels between New Labour and the Australian Labor Party (ALP) were striking.[962] Blair was said to have become close to the Labor leader Paul

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[958] Wyatt's diaries reveal that, according to his close ally, the White Paper's proposals left Murdoch "...in a furious rage..." with "that idiot Dorrell", the National Heritage minister outlining them. (Wyatt: 511, 582). There was also a public response, where Murdoch railed: "...you come and nationalise me. I don't care if you say 'get out of Britain'...". (TV interview with John Pennygate reprinted as 'The empire strikes back', *The Guardian*, May 22 1995, Culf, Andrew. 1993. 'Murdoch dismisses 'paranoid' critics', *The Guardian*, May 22 1995). See also Oborne, Peter. 1999. *Alastair Campbell : New Labour and the rise of the media class*. London: Aurum.: 142 and Craig, Jon. 1995. 'Murdoch attacks 'vendetta' over media ownership', *Daily Express*, May 24 1995.

[959] Wyatt: 536, 550, 553, 514, 582, 684, 720, 722. A telling aside by one leading journalist was that: "Cabinet ministers now talk in private, in terms similar to those used by the Bennites in the early 1980s, of the unchecked power of foreign newspaper owners." (Macintyre, Donald. 1995. 'The odd couple on honeymoon in the *Sun*', *Independent*, July 18 1995. See also Williams, *Get me a murder a day*: 240. For a discussion of the Conservative position on digital TV see Goodwin, *Television*: 152-3.

[960] Neil: xxii-xxiii, 209-10, Wyatt. See also Oborne: 141-2 and Greenslade, *Press Gang*: 621.

[961] As a senior NUJ official put it to the author: "Power works not just behind the scenes. It also works by demonstrating your power ... It is very embarrassing for politicians, but for Murdoch the important thing was that Blair was seen to be there." (Gopsill interview).

[962] Like Labour in the 1970s, Murdoch had given the ALP support and then his papers had given its leader a battering. In the 1980s, the ALP had worked hard to provide a compliant media. Its period in office saw a concentration in newspaper ownership, so that by 1994, of the twelve major dailies, seven were controlled

Keating, meeting him beforehand and travelling to the Hayman Island conference with him.[963] Particularly significantly, Blair chose this conference to make one of his most important speeches embracing globalisation, as we have seen. Furthermore, one of the consequences of going with the grain of globalisation, he told the corporation's top executives, was that press and media legislation would aim at an "...open and competitive media market...".[964]

As the pressure for diversity was waning, if going with the grain of globalisation was important and wooing Murdoch was seen to be significant, then there was an overwhelming pressure on press ownership policy considerations such as diversity. These could be seen to be subordinate or even counterproductive. The journalist and media activist turned Blairite MP Martin Linton told the author that there was a shift in Labour's policy to gain the support of press business, particularly News Corporation and the tabloids. But, he indicated, a "...price has been paid". He considered that: "There are obviously things that this government wouldn't be prepared to do because it might

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by Murdoch and three by Conrad Black, owner of the *Telegraph* titles. (Manners, Bruce. 1995. 'Blair learns from down-under world where Left is Right', *Sunday Telegraph*, December 31 1995, Pilger, John. 1994. 'The very best of mates', *Guardian Weekend*, July 23 1994, Tony Gallagher, 'Blair, Murdoch and some disturbing questions about the superhighway' *Daily Mail*, October 5 1995, Pilger, John. 1994. 'Murdoch's Love for New Labour', *Free Press*, No. 88, September-October 1995). The changes, which Paul Keating introduced as Australian government treasurer, led to Murdoch's News Limited moving from being one of the smallest newspaper companies to publishing more than 60% of Australia's newspapers. At the time, it was widely believed that the Government was partly motivated by the wish to favour media owners it regarded as 'mates'. Those Keating negotiated with included Murdoch and Conrad Black. According to a company memo, Keating is said to have told a media rival latterly that he alerted Murdoch and another media mogul Packer, but not other media firms, months prior to the new legislation being announced. (Schultz, Julianne. 1998. *Reviving the fourth estate : democracy, accountability and the media.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.: 83-4. See also Pilger, John. 1994. 'The very best of mates' *Guardian Weekend*, July 23 1994). Analogous with New Labour's concern to be represented in the press, Keating told the latter he would look favourably at a request to increase his shareholding, if he ensured his companies' newspapers provided 'fair and balanced' reporting of the Labor Party in the 1993 election. An Australian Senate inquiry judged that Keating had abused his position with this. (Schultz, Julianne. 1998. *Reviving the fourth estate : democracy, accountability and the media.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.: 1998, 84-5).

[963] Manners, Bruce. 1995. 'Blair learns from down-under world where Left is Right', *Sunday Telegraph*, December 31 1995, Pilger, John. 1994. 'The very best of mates', *Guardian Weekend*, July 23 1994, Tony Gallagher, 'Blair, Murdoch and some disturbing questions about the superhighway' *Daily Mail*, October 5 1995, Pilger, John. 1994. 'Murdoch's Love for New Labour', *Free Press*, No. 88, September-October 1995.

[964] Blair, T, 'Speech to News Corp Leadership Conference, Hayman Islands, Australia, July 17 1995', in Blair, *New Britain*: 204-5, John Pilger 'Murdoch's Love for New Labour', *Free Press*, No. 88, September-October 1995.

jeopardise the support of the press. The most obvious one is to take any action about the press itself."[965] Some party officials were said to have shared this view, according to Jempson, who was then a party press officer. It was more important to retain power than regulate press ownership.[966] However, it appears that decisions were made centrally and not all Labour policy spokespeople were involved, even by this stage.[967]

As for Murdoch and New Labour, from one side Linton considers that they had a shared understanding over such issues. Linton puts it thus: "I don't buy the notion that there has been a crude pact... But I think they do know one another well enough to know what they will do in given circumstances. So they are able to take account over what the other's reaction would be and there is no doubt in my mind that they do pay attention to that."[968] From the other, the *Sunday Times*' former editor Neil also views there was an

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[965] "Certainly Blair wasn't someone who said the press didn't matter. Blair, and especially Alastair Campbell, regarded the press as very very important. But their strategy was not at all to legislate. I suppose he'd take the Harold Wilson view even more strongly, that to try to legislate would cause such hostility...clearly from looking at his actions when he became party leader, his meetings with Murdoch...and Alastair Campbell's constant attempts to improve relations with tabloid newspapers, even the *Mail*, to reduce the hostility. I don't say he was trying to court them, but he has tried to keep communications open to reduce the hostility. And that has been a very successful strategy, well, by comparison with what went before." (Linton interview).

[966] Mike Jempson, who was a Labour Party press officer in the early period of Blair's leadership, as well as being a media activist, said party officials dismissed calls for tougher press ownership laws, saying: "It is all very good, but the important thing is we have to get into power and then we have to make sure that we retain power." He added: "Why expect the press to give you reasonable publicity when you spend your entire time telling [them] that they are the devil incarnate? So to say to Mr Murdoch or whatever, 'you are a human being too'...there is always the danger then that you are too friendly in order to make friends. Once you have said 'I am open to your view of the world' where do you draw the line?" (Mike Jempson, interview with author on September 3 2002).

[967] As Mowlam's deputy, now Lord Corbett said: "This is with the benefit of hindsight. I mean, it may well be that there were those among and around the leadership at that time who saw the advantage on at least softening the anti-Labour stance of new papers like the *Sun* in particular. Because it was clearly bloody unhelpful to have a front page like they did in the '92 election. So I think all that, of which I had no knowledge – I have to say that – if that what was happening it does not surprise me at all. And, to that extent, it makes sense...I don't think that I would have been privy to that, as it were. Whether Mo was I don't know, I really don't know." (Corbett interview).

[968] Linton interview. The *Sun*'s editor at the time, Stuart Higgins, referred to "...that agreement..." when discussing the issue on BBC's Newsnight programme. He then corrected himself to describe it as an "...er, meeting". (Keegan, William. 1997. 'May there be harmony with no Major key', *The Observer*, March 23 1997).

'understanding'.[969] Nicholas Jones identifies that Campbell was one conduit for this; providing a link with News Corporation's top brass.[970]

Labour was now briefing that it would no longer challenge News Corporation's interests, by seeking to break up its holdings. Blair was quoted as saying: "It is not a question of Murdoch being too powerful."[971] Deputy leader John Prescott slapped down Shadow Competitiveness and Regulation Minister Richard Caborn when he called for BSkyB's pay-TV monopoly to be investigated by the competition authorities.[972]

This was the prelude to what would be the most astonishing departure from Labour's previous commitment to diversity, perhaps. It would go beyond just following the deregulatory Conservatives. Both parties invoked globalisation to justify their position. The Conservatives had listened to the BMIG in applying the ideas of globalisation and convergence. Yet, Labour's consideration of going with the grain of globalisation was different to the Conservatives, indicating that this was open to interpretation.

Its policy would leapfrog the Conservatives to apply the globalisation notion in a particular fashion that attracted rather than repelled News Corp, as well as Labour's age-old allies, the Mirror Group. Of course, this process already had started under Mowlam and Smith.[973] But this came to fruition with New Labour. The tension between representation and diversity was about to increase.

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[969] He says that Blair once indicated to him that: "...how we treat Rupert Murdoch's media interests in power will depend on how his newspapers treat the Labour Party in the run up to the election". (Neil: xxv).
[970] Jones told the author: "I can tell you this, that the people who can get through to him are the executives of News International, in a way that other people could not. Now, that, therefore, to me reveals a closer relationship than is perhaps healthy." Nicholas Jones describes it as there being a "...quid pro quo...", where Labour provided a series of exclusives to News Corporation titles, in return for Labour representation, to the annoyance of other news outlets. (Nicholas Jones interview). We will explore this phenomenon in the appendix to this chapter.
[971] Brown, Kevin. 1994. 'Labour backs off threat to Murdoch', *Financial Times*, March 24 1995. See also 'Interview: Tony Blair', *New Statesman*, March 21, 1997, McSmith, Andy and Patrick Wintour. 1997. 'Major begged Thatcher to put pressure on *Sun*', *The Observer*, March 23 1997.
[972] Wynn Davies, Patricia. and Matthew Horsman.1995. 'Prescott slaps down complaint over BSkyB', *Independent*, November 21 1995.
[973] As one senior activist indicated: "Whatever Mo Mowlam says, the actual intention and the effect of Labour policy was to put Murdoch in a much stronger position. Because, once you actually start saying 'Well, we would like you to use your papers editorially to support us', this is what you would call the Faustian pact." (Granville Williams interview).

When the Government published the Broadcasting Bill itself, as other writers have indicated, the Labour frontbench went further towards neo-liberal cross-ownership deregulation.[974] The Labour leadership now did not just want to follow the Conservatives by loosening the cross-ownership laws. It wanted to get rid of them completely. In taking this stance, the Labour leadership was defining press and media policy in terms of general competition strategy, as had the Conservatives.[975] Yet, unlike Labour, the Conservatives explicitly justified having a separate 20% rule as a diversity protection.[976]

New Labour justified its stance by citing globalisation and international competitiveness. In the globalised market, where other media firms were getting larger, the new Shadow Heritage Minister Dr Jack Cunningham argued that cross-ownership regulation impeded such firms as News International – now regarded as British – from being able to compete. The nationalist objection to News International under Kinnock had been turned on its head. Nor did size matter as much. As Labour's press and broadcasting spokesman Dr Lewis Moonie, who had attempted to amend the Conservative legislation in Committee, put it: "There is nothing intrinsically wrong with big companies. There are lots of nasty small ones."[977]

But what is also significant was that Labour spokespeople went beyond globalisation in explaining the move and also invoked the question of Labour representation and the support of press businesses. It did not refer to News Corporation, which it was now

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[974] Goodwin, *Television*: 152-3, Freedman, 2000: 233-4, Freedman, 2003: 165. The Bill closely followed the White Paper on cross-ownership. The Conservatives wished to preserve the proposal to stop newspaper firms holding a market share of 20 per cent or more from expanding into terrestrial broadcasting. However, we should not overemphasise how hostile the Bill was to News Corporation's interests. The 1996 legislation did not place any limits on ownership in one medium, so the situation where News International owned 38% of the UK national newspaper market could remain. The fact that Labour did not oppose the Government's proposals and in fact would go beyond them, aided the pressure against pluralism. (Doyle, *Media ownership*: 106, 109. For an analysis of the 1996 Broadcasting Act, see Doyle, *Media ownership*: Chapters 6 and 7 and Goodwin, *Television*).

[975] Freedman indicates this with regard to broadcasting policy. (Freedman: 236, Freedman, 2003: 165).

[976] The Conservatives argued that specific media ownership rules were needed to preserve democratic debate. They were "...the safeguards necessary to maintain diversity and plurality". They also identified ownership limits as one way of defending control of broadcasting "...by editorially partisan newspaper groups...". (Department of National Heritage: 7, 20-1).

[977] HOC July 2 1996, col 843-4, Brown, Maggie. 1996. 'Gloves off in the free for all', *The Guardian*, April 15 1996.

allowing to buy up sections of terrestrial TV – to add to its ownership of one-third of the newspaper market and its satellite monopoly – while it was lobbying the conglomerate to gain support. Instead, Labour justified the shift by pointing to the Mirror Group. As shadow minister Cunningham complained: "...the Government's friends are being looked after in the legislation, and the single newspaper that supports Labour is being excluded".[978]

This statement indicates that how New Labour was going with the grain of globalisation was also shaped by concerns to appease press business. If concerns about the Mirror Group were an important reason, it would not invalidate the point that diversity across the media was being sacrificed for Labour representation. However, the Mirror Group was already 'on board' with Labour. What was novel and also significant was Labour's new 'understanding' with News Corporation, which welcomed the Labour move.[979]

Another indication that the Labour frontbench was going further than simply following Conservative catch-up in accepting neo-liberal globalisation was that two right-wing Conservatives resigned from the Government to support the Labour position. Despite this pressure to remove the controls, the Government stood its ground and the amendment was lost.[980]

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[978] HOC July 2 1996, col. 843-4. See also Foot, Paul. 1996. 'Sour note, Moonie tune', *The Guardian*, April 15 1996 and Leading article, 'Mirror, Mirror on the screen . .', *The Guardian*, April 17 1996 and Doyle, *Media ownership*: 110.

[979] The media group had rejected the 20% rule as passé in the new media age where its recent submission to the Government had suggested that consumers were accessing news in ever-new ways. "And no group dominates, or can hope to dominate all the pathways to the public," it claimed. (News International, *Response to the White Paper, A New Future for Communications*: 4, www.communicationswhitepaper.gov.uk, quoted in Doyle, *Media ownership*: 135).

[980] Goodwin, *Television*: 152-3, Wintour, Patrick. 1996. 'Government facing defeat', *The Guardian*, May 16 1996, Smithers, Rebecca and Patrick Wintour. 1996. 'Tory MPs quit after media bill revolt', *The Guardian*, May 22 1996.

Opposition to Labour's new stance

Socialists inside and outside the Labour Party challenged New Labour's neo-liberal volte-face. One outside, Paul Foot, saw that it gave increased power to the media owners, which could be used against Labour.[981] More importantly, ignored by Freedman, who implies more homogeneous support in the Labour ranks for the new stance, a number of Labour backbenchers broke ranks to support amendments opposing the new Labour right's deregulatory thrust.[982] An amendment proposed by Mullin and Austin Mitchell, in a shift from his previous standpoint, aimed to bar all newspapers with more than 10% of the market from being able to buy into television. This, the rebels noted, would exclude all firms owning tabloid titles from TV ownership.[983] Mitchell pointed to fears that importing newspaper values into broadcasting could threaten TV balance and lead to cross promotion.[984] While Mullin obliquely indicated that Murdoch's hand was behind Labour's latest move, other parties' members explicitly talked of "pay-back" after the Hayman Island trip.[985] More than 70 members of the House supported the Labour backbenchers' motion. But both the Labour frontbench's amendments and Mullin's were defeated.[986]

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[981] He contrasted Labour's former position with the move, which he saw as handing "...power, strength and confidence to unelected, irresponsible media oligarchies which, if their commercial interests are threatened for a single second, even by a Labour government, will turn on their former benefactors and tear them to pieces". (Foot, Paul. 1996. 'Sour note, Moonie tune', *The Guardian*, April 15 1996. See also Freedman, 2000: 234, Freedman, 2003: 166).

[982] Freedman, 2000: 233-4, Freedman, 2003: 166.

[983] The opposition included those not associated with the left, such as Giles Radice. (HOC July 2 1996, col. 833-4, 835-7).

[984] HOC July 2 1996, col. 835-7.

[985] HOC July 2 1996, cols. 835, 838 and 840.

[986] HOC July 2 1996, cols. 843-850, Gopsill, Tim. 1996. 'Meanwhile back on the benches...', *Free Press*, No. 93, July-August 1996, Humphreys, *New Labour*: 229.

The effect of the understanding

However, the 'understanding' between Blair and Murdoch did appear to have a corollary for New Labour, in terms of Labour representation. Campbell provided privileged access to News Corporation's papers, as part of his strategy both before and after being elected.[987] At the same time, Labour's coverage in the *Sun* perceptibly shifted, while the *Times* became less hostile. Blair's by-line appeared on numerous articles in the newspapers of News Corporation and other groups.[988] The day after Blair had written characterising himself as the defender of Britain's national identity, came the announcement that "The *Sun* backs Blair...". The wording was telling. The *Sun* was only supporting Blair and not those 'unreconstructed' sections of the party whose politics were not tightly moulded by the Thatcherite legacy. It was backing a Labour victory in its own neo-liberal terms.[989]

A number of senior *Sun* journalists were shocked and initially hostile, providing an indication that top management made this decision.[990] The surprise was not confined to

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[987] Nicholas Jones interview, Jones, Nicholas. 2001. *The control freaks : how new Labour gets its own way*. London: Politico's, 2001.: esp. 198-206, Oborne: esp. 174-176. For instance, after News Corporation closed *Today* down, the *Sun* quoted Blair imploring readers to read Campbell's column in that title. (Horsman, Matthew. 1995. 'The man who killed *Today* holds key to tomorrow', *Independent*, November 21 1995). See also the appendix to this chapter.

[988] Significantly, it was on Europe and nationalism that the key blow in the *Sun* was struck in March 1997. On March 17, the political editor Trevor Kavanagh, who was close to Murdoch and an initial Blair sceptic identified the significance of an article by Tony Blair on page 2 of the Sun with the headline "I'm a British Patriot". Kavanagh wrote that Blair's pledges would "...reassure voters that New Labour has strong reservations about a totally pro-European policy". (McKie, Clingers: 119). See also Neil: xxiv. This was significant because it indicated Blair was prepared to adapt his own pro-EU stance in seeking the title's approval. For Mandelson this was a particular political adaptation. He has been a vice-chair of the pro-Euro European Movement. (Williams, *Get me a murder a day*). The author was told that, according to Major's media officer Shelia Gunn, the Conservatives attempted to negotiate for News International's support prior to the 1997 election. Significantly, Europe was a sticking point in their failure. (Linton interview. See also McSmith and Wintour).

[989] As former editor Higgins said later: "The lines of communication were strictly with Blair and Campbell. That's why our headline was 'The Sun Backs Blair' because we had reservations about the rest of the party." (Interview with Greenslade, Roy. 1997. 'Nice one Sun, says Tony', *Guardian*, May 19 1997). So, it did not endorse all Labour stood for. For instance, it condemned the mildly redistributive initiative of the windfall tax as looking "...dodgier by the moment". The Sun's leader announced "The Labour Party say they have changed ...Let's give them a chance to prove it." (McKie, Clingers: 120). Seymour-Ure makes a similar point. (Seymour-Ure, Editorial Opinion: 85).

[990] It was said that four of the most senior journalists opposed it and the Scottish edition rebelled – delaying the announcement north of the border by a day. (McSmith, Andy and John Arlidge, '*Sun* chiefs tried to defy Murdoch' and McSmith and Wintour). Former editor Higgins told a fellow journalist that "...a lot of

the *Sun*'s newsrooms.[991] One prominent Labour supporter, musician Paul Weller, who had been part of the party's youth and cultural initiative of the 1980s, *Red Wedge*, spoke for many bewildered, but not necessarily hostile, party members and trade unionists. He described the relationship between the new *Sun* and New Labour thus: "... it slated them and tore them to pieces, and all of a sudden, the next day it's all changed. It was like in Orwell's 1984 – one minute everyone's told to hate some country and the next day they're the allies again and it's the other lot you're supposed to hate."[992]

By the time of the 1997 election, as many tabloids as broadsheets backed Labour.[993] For the first time in living memory, more than 8 million voters were reading a Labour-supporting title. This well outshone the explicitly Conservative supporting titles' 4.5 million voters.[994] There was also a huge disparity on the Sundays.[995] And even the Conservative-supporting papers' management showed less hostility than in the past.[996]

Whether Labour would have ever been required to shift its position on newspaper cross-ownership to achieve the *Sun*'s backing is open to question, even with this 'understanding'. According to Wyatt's diaries, the go-between connecting News Corporation and New Labour, Irwin Stelzer, identified two reasons for Murdoch's rapprochement with Labour – his anger with the Major government and his fear of being on the losing side.[997] It was in News Corporation's business interests to be on the winning side.[998] Tellingly, the *Sun*'s editor shared this view.[999] It can be credibly argued that News

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people at a senior level...", including the hugely important Trevor Kavanagh, were at least sceptical. (Interview with Greenslade, Roy. 1997. 'Nice one Sun, says Tony', *Guardian*, May 19 1997, Neil: xxiv).

[991] Even as seasoned an observer as Linton earlier that year had predicted that the *Sun* would side with the Conservatives. (Linton, Martin. 'It's still up to you, my Sun', *The Guardian*, January 6 1997).

[992] Interview with Baker, Lindsay. 1997. 'Made in England', *The Guardian*, June 28 1997.

[993] The *Sun*, *Mirror* and *Daily Star* were positioned on the same side as the *Guardian*, *Independent* and *Financial Times*.

[994] Franklin, Bob. 2004. *Packaging Politics*, London: Arnold: 143.

[995] Greenslade, Roy. 1997. 'The press. Taming paper tigers, but for how long?', *The Guardian*, May 1 1997.

[996] We shall discuss the Express titles later in Appendix 3. Their rigid support for the Conservatives was waning – reflecting their management. And the Mail titles' proprietor Lord Rothermere had indicated the year before that he could conceive of some of his papers supporting Blair. (Bellos, Alex. 'Daily Mail proprietor gives new hint of election backing for Blair', *The Guardian*, April 15 1996).

[997] Wyatt: 720, 722.

[998] Seymour-Ure, Editorial Opinion: 79.

Corporation needed Labour's support more than the party needed the corporation's, not withstanding all that we have considered regarding representation.[1000]

PRESS OWNERSHIP POLICY AND DEMOCRATISATION

In tune with New Labour's shift away from economic democracy in political discourse and the move towards market populism that we shall explore in this chapter's Appendix 1, even a debate on democratic control of the press was muted. Under Smith, Labour pressed for a legal right of reply, as Appendix 2 will consider. A think tank advising the Labour leadership made demands for journalistic autonomy, focusing on control rather than ownership. But New Labour ignored its demands with regard to the press.

Before 1997, the IPPR tentatively followed the path of democratisation in its research, which New Labour considered.[1001] The researchers' New Labour stance led them to criticise previous policy. They claimed the Labour left had concentrated on ownership rather than control. In order to justify this claim, the writers ignored the past left debates on democratic media ownership. Instead, they implied that the Labour left had not considered the journalistic autonomy question. Yet, part of the reason this argument could be used as a stick to beat the left with was that, by now, it was underplaying

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[999] He said: "Imagine the nightmare scenario for us on election day, with Labour having the landslide they had and us being on the wrong side. ... It would have been a complete nightmare, going against everything we think the *Sun* stands for, i.e. popular opinion." (Interview with Greenslade, Roy. 1997. 'Nice one Sun, says Tony', *Guardian*, May 19 1997). In other words, it was key to be on the winning side for the *Sun*.

[1000] Consider again the quote in the last reference by the Sun's then editor. Note that, implicitly, even he was not claiming credit for the victory. He was concerned more that Labour might well have won without him and his paper. "Through the *Sun* newspaper and through other newspapers, even the *Mail* ... people had just shifted, there was a sea change in public opinion. And, in my view, Murdoch understood that as well – that it was tactically wise to recognise that shift and by confirming it and then making that ludicrous claim, you know, that they were part of the victory, then it seems to me that you have got the situation that is myth rather than reality. It was not, at the edges it might have added one or two seats to Labour, but I think decisively there had been a shift...It was seen as the Government in waiting." (Granville Williams interview). As an NUJ official put it: "Murdoch does not control the world, you know Murdoch fits in with it, but he is always on the winning side, always... His judgements are very good." (Gopsill interview). A similar point can be made in relation to how other newspapers had been wooing Labour. As Goodwin notes, the BMIG's lobbyists were among those that targeted the Labour Party three years previously, as it had been riding high in the polls and appeared to be on course for electoral victory. (Goodwin, *Television*:: 146).

[1001] Collins and Murroni.

demands for industrial democracy. In fact, even campaigners in the CPBF had gone cold on the issue after the demands for an industrial right of reply had died down.[1002]

The IPPR researchers reconsidered the discussion in the last Royal Commission on the Press. It had called for editorial self-determination over production. They called for journalists to be given this same level of 'independence' as the Royal Commission had given editors, including the ability to refuse material and refute editorial policy.[1003] In the context of the rest of their proposals, this demand was remarkably strident. Journalistic refusal recalled the most radical policy implemented by other European social democratic governments. The demand to be able to reject editorial policy even goes beyond these. In fact, it would be formally unworkable, unless accompanied by alternative editorial decision-making structures. It would only be possible with some form of journalist workers' control.

Regarding public participation in the press, the researchers argued for wider accountability and representation in media regulation. They recognised the problems of the lack of direct participation in media decisions, identifying a paternalistic legacy in media legislation. To partly overcome this, they advocated a Consumer Council for Media and Communications to represent consumer interests. Nevertheless, the researchers did not make clear how this would operate in the self-regulatory world of the press.[1004] This aspect of the IPPR's work made little immediate impact on New Labour thought with regard to the press. Labour ignored calls for journalistic autonomy. New Labour's 2002 draft Communications Bill, which we will consider later, advocated minimal marketised public participation with a Consumer Board, indicating a possible link with the IPPR proposals. But none of this impinged on national newspaper regulation.[1005]

[1002] Granville Williams interview. A notable exception was James Curran. See Curran, *Policy for the press.*
[1003] Collins and Murroni: 73-4.
[1004] *Ibid.*: 178-9, 185.
[1005] DTI/DCMS, *Policy Narrative*, DTI/DCMS, *Draft Communications Bill*, DTI/DCMS, *Regulatory impact assessment.*

Instead, considerations of 'direct democracy', which have involved Labour and the broader media, came in the new market populist form we shall consider in this chapter's Appendix 1. As we shall see, there has been a subterranean discourse concerning the supplanting of representative democracy by 'direct democracy' of a particularly marketised sort. Other aspects of this new direct democracy include the consideration of the use of citizens' juries, telephone polls, referendums and internet discussion and voting, to just name those referred to in an internal party discussion in 2002.[1006]

LABOUR IN OFFICE: PRESS OWNERSHIP AND CROSS-OWNERSHIP POLICIES, REPRESENTATION AND DIVERSITY

Labour in government, in tandem with going with the grain of globalisation, extended the new press and media strategy it developed in opposition under Kinnock and Blair. The motivation was to gain the maximum Labour representation. However, there was a continued tension with Labour's previous goal of press ownership diversity, which continued to be downgraded. Nevertheless, the representation strategy was little challenged by a Labour and trade union movement, which saw it as successful and, as we shall see in Appendix 1, was replicated in the union leadership. The Labour hierarchy continued to develop the 'understanding', which had placated press and media owners. However, the Government's representation strategy started to run into difficulties and showed signs of unravelling. This could have implications for Labour's press ownership policy.

Three interrelated pressures guided Labour Party policy on entering government. The Government had accepted a particular conception of globalisation. Secondly, Labour was concerned to merge press policy with competition policy, in line with EU policy. Thirdly, these notions were shaped by press and media organisations to justify their continued expansion. At moments, the Labour government explicitly acknowledged this guidance. It embraced the large press and media firms' conception, rather than that of Labour's

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[1006] National Policy Forum Consultation Document, 'Democracy, Citizenship and Political Engagement', Labour Party, 2002, 11.

former allies – the Labour and trade union campaigners for media plurality. Diversity continued to have a low priority. All of these pressures were on display in the debate concerning predatory pricing.

War!

The *Times*' price war had been launched in 1993. It was significant in that it replayed some of the issues we have been discussing. The Labour government both appeared to be concerned to not challenge News Corporation and to bring newspaper ownership law in line with toughened general competition legislation. The debate was not about social democratic intervention but about how stringent should be classical liberal anti-monopoly law.

By bringing press policy in line with competition policy, the aim was to influence firms' behaviour rather than alter the structure of the market. In doing so, this would bring it in line with EU policy. EU policy has tended to concentrate on competition policy because of its emphasis on the Single Market and controversy over whether it has the jurisdiction to interfere in national press and media diversity legislation. It may be considered that the Government simply wanted British convergence with EU policy, as has happened in other EU states.[1007] However, as Doyle's research indicates, many media companies demanded this convergence. It is also the case that other countries under the EU's jurisdiction have other laws to specifically restrict ownership. [1008]

As Doyle notes, the problem with competition law in a press context is that is concerned with increasing efficiency rather than diversity. It is less consistent than prescribed newspaper and cross-ownership limits, as it relies on a public interest test and a case-by-case approach. This makes it much more susceptible to Government interference. Also, while strengthened competition law encourages diversity in some instances, few competition enquiries have led to decisive action. Research indicates it has not been particularly effective at a national level in other European states. More importantly,

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[1007] As Meier and Trappel argue, the competition policy notion of economists has come to dominate the public policy conception of diversity across Europe. (Meier and Trappel: 38-59, 40).
[1008] Doyle, *Media ownership*: 33-4, 112-3.

competition and plurality are not the same. Titles in the UK's oligopolistic market may be ruthlessly competitive for market share.[1009] Enhancing competition, therefore, is not enough. Most media ownership restrictions are based on concerns to protect cultural and political pluralism – different from competition promotion.[1010] Competition does not guarantee a range of voices required for pluralism.[1011]

The battle in the national daily newspaper market began in 1993 when News Corp cut the *Times*' price from 45p to 30p, initiating a price war.[1012] As Murdoch put it, the *Times* circulation was "...uneconomic. So we cut the price and it worked wonderfully."[1013]

Under John Smith, Labour frontbenchers had consistently called for an investigation into this, as competitors accused News Corporation of predatory pricing, i.e. selling the paper below cost price. Robin Cook claimed that News Corp's policy was "...calculated to restrict consumer choice...".[1014] It could cause competitors to close, particularly the *Independent.* Although hostile to News Corp's interests, the frontbench shared a consistent classical liberal position. They saw the specific use of competition law as key

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[1009] Doyle, *Understanding*: 125.
[1010] Doyle, *Understanding*: 169.
[1011] Doyle, *Media ownership*: 27, 112-3, 131, 179. As Colin Sparks indicates, oligopolistic competition in the British newspaper market has normally operated through product differentiation. Yet, the *Times*' price war was an exception. It came about because there had been a sharp decrease in the national market from the late 1980s. In this situation, all the newspaper firms had excess capacity and so the excess profit, which they gained as oligopolists, was threatened. (Sparks, *The Press*: 49). In such a situation, there is always an interest in setting a lower price, as long as others do not follow suit. If they do, all the firms involved lose out. The competitive pricing that happened in the 1990s meant that companies had not even covered their costs in order to compete. The *Times* managed to gain most of its extra sales from its rivals. (Doyle, *Understanding*: 128, 132-3).
[1012] Bell, Emily. 'Rivals sniff at cut-price tactics', *The Observer*, September 5 1993, Anon., 'The multi-media monopoly machine', *Daily Mirror*, September 3 1993.
[1013] Interview with Bill Hagerty, 'Blair, God and the net', *The Guardian*, November 29 1999.
[1014] The then shadow trade and industry spokesman Robin Cook and shadow heritage secretary Ann Clwyd made the call in 1993. Cook described Murdoch's 'domination' of the media as "...not healthy for democracy" and needed to be curbed. (Cook, Robin and Clwyd, Ann. 1993. 'Cook and Clwyd call for MMC inquiry into Murdoch ownership', Labour Party Press Release, September 3 1993, Boogan, Steve 'Labour demands Murdoch inquiry', *Independent*, September 4 1993). After the OFT rejected the call, Cook repeated his concern in the Commons in 1994, arguing that the pricing policy was "...calculated to restrict consumer choice in the newspaper industry". (HOC July 20 1994, col. 444). Mowlam also later called for an investigation, warning of "...the dangers of concentration of media ownership to the diversity of information sources". (Mowlam, Marjorie. 1994. 'Letter: Labour fears on concentrated media ownership', *The Guardian*, August 11 1994, Henry, Georgina. 1994. 'Balancing act on a see-saw', *The Guardian*, June 27 1994). Those newspapers not owned by News Corporation such as the *Guardian*, *Independent* and *Telegraph* had been calling for action on predatory pricing. (For a discussion on this, see Humphreys, *New Labour*: 229-232).

to newspaper regulation. Yet the OFT had examined the issue in 1993, 1994 and 1996 and found no basis on which to act against News Corporation.[1015]

After coming into office, Labour introduced a Competition Bill to tighten up policy.[1016] Labour MPs were among those demanding the Bill be amended in the light of the OFT investigations. They felt the Government had not acted on its concerns in opposition to protect press diversity's special requirements.[1017] Yet, the Labour frontbench dismissed a call to strengthen the law in a classical liberal manner, in a way that would have challenged News Corporation.

In common with a number of non-media issues, the opposition united left MPs with Lords' members. Lord Borrie was a party member, a Labour advisor on competition policy and a former Director General of Fair Trading. Lord Tom McNally was a former Labour media advisor and now a Lib Dem peer. Together, they successfully introduced Competition Bill amendments aimed at strengthening predatory pricing provisions. McNally told the Lords that increasing press diversity with ventures similar to the threatened *Independent* would be "...unthinkable..." under the price-cutting environment. Instead, the Labour government was accused of acceding to Murdoch's wishes; a claim ministers rejected.[1018]

Despite its experience in opposition, New Labour argued that the amendments were unworkable and unnecessary. It was "...wrong in principle..." to treat the press differently from any other good.[1019]

[1015] Office of Fair Trading, 'Press Release: Newspaper pricing: News International gives assurances', May 21 1999.
[1016] Humphreys, *New Labour*: 125.
[1017] *Ibid.*: 229-230.
[1018] House of Lords Hansard for 13 Nov 1997, col. 309-313. There were also claims in the press that Labour had turned from its position in opposition in order to keep the *Sun* on its side, although ministers denied this. (Humphreys, *New Labour*: 230).
[1019] The ennobled industrialist Lord Haskill, who was now speaking for the Government in the Lords, saw that the Bill would cover predatory practices. (Lords Hansard text for 13 Nov 1997, col. 313). The latter claim was from Labour minister Lord Simon. (Lords Hansard text for February 9 1998, col. 913-23). Labour whipped its peers against the amendments. However, 23 Labour Lords including senior former ministers and the recently ennobled film producer Lord Puttnam backed the revolt. Only around 80 Labour peers voted for the Government. They included Lord Hattersley, Lord Barnett, Lord Ashley, Lord Shore and Baroness Castle. (Lords Hansard text for February 9 1998, col. 923, Humphreys, *New Labour*: 230-1).

The Bill's third reading in July 1988 saw Labour MPs still backing the amendments, which were defeated.[1020] The Europeanist loyalist Giles Radice was one of those who expressed concerns about News Corporation's influence on British politics.[1021] Yet, one of the few Labour backbenchers to vocally back the Government, media activist Austin Mitchell again argued that Labour representation was more important than an "...explosion of impotent anger against Rupert Murdoch...".[1022] The Government defeated the amendments more narrowly in the Lords, with some notable Labour figures still defying it.[1023]

At first glance, subsequent events appeared to legitimate New Labour's claims. Peter Humphreys' sophisticated review of New Labour's media policies notes that a fourth enquiry by the Office of Fair Trading, following complaints by newspaper competitors, found the *Times* guilty of deliberately cutting prices to affect competition.[1024] This

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The Government argued that the new Competition Bill would strengthen the existing legislation, partly because it would bring the UK in line with European law. This was because, unlike the previous legislation, there was no need to prove that a company intended to force out a competitor to show that a firm has flouted the law. See, for instance, Trade and Industry secretary Margaret Beckett, HOC 11 May 1998, col. 28

[1020] Chris Mullin and Labour leadership loyalist Giles Radice, Treasury Committee chair, led support for the Lords amendments. Reflecting that this was a debate between different classical liberal conceptions of regulation, Mullin had argued that his amendment merely attempted to create a free market against anti-competitive practices. (HOC 11 May 1998, col. 70). After an extensive debate, the timid Radice withdrew his amendment. Mullin's amendment was overwhelmingly defeated, with Radice and Solely among the Government's supporters. The Labour rebels included the former shadow minister Clwyd, media campaigners such as David Winnick, those on the left, and those formerly seen as on the party's right, like Gwyneth Dunwoody. (HOC July 8 1998, col. 1165).

[1021] HOC July 8 1998, col. 1136-52. The debate again focused on News Corporation. (Humphreys, *New Labour*: 231). A number of speakers made the point that Labour in opposition was more keen to tackle this than in government. See, for instance HOC 8 Jul 1998, col. 1141. One Labour rebel, Bob Marshall-Andrews viewed the need for specific legislation because: "No other major commercial undertaking is owned for the express and specific purpose of obtaining and using political power and influence." He convincingly argued that predatory pricing that in any other industry would be economic suicide could be engaged in the newspaper market for political gain. The Labour Government it was said, contradictorily, saw the need for specific competition legislation for newspapers when it came to the Fair Trading Act, but not with predatory pricing. (HOC July 8 1998, col. 1149-51).

[1022] He argued that: "As we spent more than 20 years attacking the politics of The *Sun* and have now come to accept so many of them, that is a rather curious ground on which to attack Mr Murdoch." (HOC July 8 1998, col. 1155).

[1023] In October 1988, Lord McNally again tabled an amendment in the Lords. This time it was defeated by 116 to 87, with Labour peers including Kinnock's former economic advisor Lord Desai, as well as Lord Borrie, voting for it. (House of Lords Hansard Debates for October 20 1998, col. 1347-60).

[1024] Humphreys, New Labour: 232. Following independent research that showed that News Corp's price-cutting strategy had affected other newspapers, the OFT's director John Bridgeman judged in May 1999 that the Times had deliberately made a loss. This was judged to have happened between June 1996 and January 1998 when the Monday edition was sold for 10p. (OFT, 'Press Release: Newspaper pricing: News

ironically justified the Labour government's claim that the rules were tight enough to snare News Corporation abuse.

However, the reprimand for this was a minimal 'slap on the wrist' – in contrast to another ruling on a far smaller-scale local title.[1025] OFT director John Bridgeman decided merely to put News Corp 'on notice'. He justified this by arguing that the predatory pricing had stopped.[1026]

In retrospect, we can see that the basis of the amendments from Mullin and the Lords was formally wrong. Despite his expertise in the area, Lord Borrie was inaccurate in his assessment, which Mullin followed, that the Government's Bill would be ineffectual against the *Times*. However, in doing so, they kept up the pressure on the OFT in confronting News Corporation and so uncovered an important dynamic.[1027] The Government refused to directly target the News Corporation empire, which was later found to be engaged in predatory pricing. This indicated its concern to bring press law in line with general competition law as well as its timidity in challenging, in the name of diversity, its new ally in Labour representation.[1028] The weak and insignificant punishment handed out by the OFT – the minimal reprimand given for predatory pricing to News Corporation – may also have been an indication of this tentativeness.

International gives assurances', May 21 1999). On the independent research, see Atkinson, Mark. 1999. 'The heavy price of Murdoch', *The Guardian*, March 30 1999.

[1025] The OFT fined Aberdeen Journals Ltd more than £1.3 million in 2001 for predatory pricing in its advertising in a free newspaper, in order to expel a rival free title. (OFT, 'Press Release: Scottish newspaper group fined for predatory pricing', July 16 2001).

[1026] Bridgeman concluded that: "This behaviour ended 16 months ago, and so it seems to me that informal assurances are the most appropriate remedy in this case." (OFT, Press Release: Newspaper pricing).

[1027] Granville Williams interview.

[1028] It may have been coincidental, but as the Labour MP David Winnick, put it, the view was that: "...in order to be re-elected, we should not do anything by way of legislation that will give offence to the person who owns so much of the media in this country". (HOC 8 Jul 1998, col. 1152).

Alongside this, New Labour's perception of economic globalisation and its insistence on converging media policy with general competition law was dictating press ownership policy. In line with Labour's earlier position, the pre-election arts and media document *Create the future* and the 1997 election manifesto reflected this globalisation rhetoric and the latter, a deregulatory passion. In the former, the now heritage secretary Jack Cunningham made a leap from the valuable assessment that the world's media were proliferating to the claim that there is a "...growing globalisation of the media".[1029] The manifesto contained little specifically on the press, and only one paragraph on the media as a whole. Yet it insisted that globalisation should dictate deregulation.[1030]

Create the future also formed a bridgehead between previous and future policy on another theme, the role of the press, media and design in the 'knowledge-driven' so-called New Economy, so influential in US thinking. This was exemplified by Smith's book, *Creative Britain*, which defined Labour's cultural approach in its first term.[1031] As Freedman argues well, it emphasised the particular strengths of the now 'creative industries' for Britain's international economic well-being.[1032] What is striking about this book is that it attempted to wed Smith's previous soft left cultural industries approach with the New Economy ideas. Yet, it eschewed any traditional Keynesian interventionist

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[1029] Labour Party. 1997a. *Create the future : a strategy for cultural policy, arts and the creative economy*. London: Labour Party.: 11.

[1030] The "...regulatory framework for media and broadcasting should reflect the realities of a far more open and competitive economy, and enormous technological advance...Labour will balance sensible rules, fair regulation and national and international competition....". For the viewers – it did not discuss the newspaper readers – "...quality and diversity..." would, nevertheless, be upheld. (Labour, Party. 1997c. *New Labour : because Britain deserves better*. London: Labour Party, 1997.: 31. See also Freedman, 2000: 239).

[1031] The importance of the press and media and design (which were regarded as an integrated whole) was not so much seen for its role in democratic discourse, as for its function as one of the most profitable and sizeable sectors of the economy and thus central to globalisation and economic competitiveness. This reflected the previous emphasis on cultural industries. But it also looked forward what Freedman termed the concentration on the "...economic value of the commodification of knowledge..." (Labour Party, *Create the future*: 10-11, Smith, Chris. 1998. *Creative Britain*. London: Faber, 1998., Freedman, 2000: 241, Freedman, 2003: 171).

[1032] It boasted that "...we have recognized the importance of this whole industrial sector that no one hitherto has even conceived of as 'industry'." (*Ibid.*: 26). See also Humphreys, *New Labour*: 221). It is certainly true is that it reflected certain key themes. Dubbed by the press as 'Cool Britannia', it sought to develop Britain as a cultural powerhouse (Freedman, 2000: 241, Freedman, 2003: 171).

measures to bolster these media industries. Instead, Smith, again saw globalisation's unstoppable rise as playing that role.[1033] A problem with this was, as New Labour insiders later quietly admitted, the New Economy emphasis was mistaken.[1034]

Another innovation was the creation of the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) to oversee this. However, as if to indicate this profit-driven approach and to emphasise a structural, as well as ideological, link with general competition law, the DCMS started working closely together with the DTI. Thus, the DTI and DCMS together launched the Green Paper *Regulating Communications* in 1998. At this stage, Labour rejected complete convergence with general competition law and cross-media deregulation.[1035] Yet, it pressed the argument that globalisation required diversity to be sacrificed. It used the determinist objectivist language we have seen before, assigning as little role to the subjective as the crudest Marxist economism.[1036] New Labour indicated there was no choice about economic development. There was a globalisation wave and the Government's role was to make sure the British economy surfed it.

This globalisation perspective was consistent with other non-media Government policies. But the press and media firms were also pushing for this. This pressure noticeably influenced the Government to go yet further in distancing itself from Labour party policy

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[1033] Thus, the aim was to provide "...products and services which we can exploit..." in the "...expanding international markets...". And again, it was "...British innovation and creativity..." which "...played a central role in the relentless process of globalization". (*Ibid.*: 29, 30).

[1034] Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State at the DTI, admitted that: "We did give the impression in our first term that we were more interested in this so-called New Economy than in manufacturing." (Today Programme, BBC Radio 4, August 6 2002). A lively description of the rise and demise of the New Economy in the United States is given in Frank.

[1035] It still genuflected in front of the traditional adage of diversity that there was a need to "...have controls on ownership over and above those applied by general competition law to ensure that no individual voice becomes too dominant". At this stage, the decision was not to challenge the cross-market provisions of the 1996 Broadcasting Act. These had been "...debated fully..." in the passing of the act. The Labour government saw these as proving "...regulatory certainty, while allowing considerable flexibility to deal with market developments." (Department for Culture, Media, Sport, Trade Great Britain Department of, Industry, and Media Great Britain Department for Culture. 1998. *Regulating communications : approaching convergence in the information age*. London: Stationery Office, 1998.: 32).

[1036] It was the case that "...[s]ome concentration of ownership has been regarded as inevitable...". But the Labour government paper also went further in justifying oligopolisation by invoking globalisation and the mantra of international competitive advantage. Concentration was now, in fact "...possibly desirable, since it confers advantage in terms of global competitiveness". (Department for Culture, Media, Sport, Trade Great Britain Department of, Industry, and Media Great Britain Department for Culture. 1998. Regulating communications : approaching convergence in the information age. London: Stationery Office, 1998.: 16).

on diversity. *The Way Ahead* was the Government's response to the Green Paper consultation, published the same year. This made no mention of the need for cross-ownership rules at all. Instead, the DTI/DCMS emphasised that general competition law would be enough to stop abuses.[1037] This paper explicitly made clear a factor that had been involved in the Labour government following this path. Respondents – a large majority of which were individual press and media firms, industry bodies or regulators – had 'accepted' this shift. Yet again, the Government expressed this move as an objective process of market forces, where the author was neither it nor media businesses. Contrary to the experience of increased concentration in the media industry, there was a need to expunge "...unnecessary regulation...".[1038]

This process further developed with the White Paper *A New Future for Communications*, published in December 2000, which proposed a new industry regulator, Ofcom. Its promotion of markets, competition policy and regulatory reform, replicated the Labour government's general approach to industrial policy mentioned at this chapter's start.[1039] New Labour had a tentative and vague position on cross-ownership at this time. However, the White Paper opened up the possibility of further liberalisation and 'a lighter touch' for newspaper mergers.[1040]

Labour's 2001 manifesto mentioned nothing about media ownership itself.[1041] However, its business manifesto vowed that it would bring in communication reforms that would remove "...the archaic regulations that are slowing the pace of innovation and

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[1037] "As competition develops, the need for sector-specific regulation is likely to reduce as greater reliance is placed on the operation of general competition law." (DCMS/DTI, *Regulating communications*) See also Freedman, 2000: 248, Freedman, 2003: 174.
[1038] *Ibid.*: Section 1.13, Section 2.11, Section 3.11.
[1039] See AHRB Centre for British Film and Television Studies, Sheffield Hallam University, 'Broadcasting, Citizen Rights and Social Cohesion', Section 5, Sheffield Hallam University, Doyle, *Media ownership*: 130-1.
[1040] It welcomed comments on these areas. (Department of Culture, Media, Sport, Trade Great Britain Department of, Industry, and Media Great Britain Department for Culture. 2000. *A new future for communications*. London: TSO, 2000.: Chapter 4). This prompted media commentators and newspaper executives to view that ministers wished to avoid offending newspaper proprietors in the run-up to a general election period. (Wells, Matt, David Teather, Dan Milmo and Maggie Brown. 2000. 'Great white hope', *The Guardian*, November 20, 2000).
[1041] Labour Party, *Labour's business manifesto 1997*.

change".[1042] Possibly coincidentally, the election saw the press businesses, and particularly News Corp, provide Labour with new levels of support. The *Express* newspapers had come on board in the interim, as we shall see in this chapter's Appendix 3, and 2001 saw the *Times* back the party. Following on from the argument that the *Sun* had used four years previously, it suggested that New Labour had entrenched some core Thatcherite tenets in government.[1043] By 2001, seven of the ten national newspapers and six of the Sundays supported Labour. In terms of circulation 72 per cent of the voters by then read a pro-Labour title, while an astonishing 7.8 per cent read a Conservative paper.[1044] Equally, although the *Sun* wobbled in its support, calling Blair 'the most dangerous man in Britain' and the cabinet the most arrogant in history, it still backed the Labour leadership; marking a huge difference from 1992.[1045]

The Communications Bill: 'the most significant legislation on the media in 50 years'

Following this, there was another possible coincidence. In October 2001, the Government used a newspaper industry function to launch a consultation paper on media ownership. This presented the options, among others, that cross-media limits be repealed.[1046] Respondents included News International and the CPBF.[1047] And the following month, Rupert Murdoch publicly threatened to withdraw his support for the Blair government after setbacks to BSkyB.[1048]

[1042] *Ibid.*: 19.
[1043] Anon. 2001. 'Times gives backing to Blair', *Independent*, June 5 2001, Allison, Rebecca. 2001. 'Times backs Labour for the first time', *The Guardian*, June 5 2001.
[1044] However, this indicated a collapse in Tory support rather than backing for Labour. (Franklin, *Political Communications*, 1994: 143-4.
[1045] *Ibid.*: 144-5.
[1046] Consultation on Media Ownership Rules, sections 6.4.15 and 6.5.12.
[1047] News International plc, Response to Consultation on Media Ownership Rules, DCMS website, http://www.culture.gov.uk/creative/index.html, 2002. Campaign For Press and Broadcasting Freedom, *Response to Consultation on Media Ownership Rules By DCMS and DTI*, (November 2001), CPBF, 2001.
[1048] He was quoted as saying that it was "not his style" to influence the Government into regulatory changes. Yet, as if to indicate this *was precisely* the case, he was quoted as warning: "It would be interesting if a lot of our newspapers weren't so Labour supporting. Then Tony Blair would not have to worry about being seen to be looking after his friends." (Cassy, John. 2001. 'Murdoch on Blair, Britain and babies. And those whiners at ITV as well', *The Guardian*, November 3 2001). The quote was reported in the Daily Telegraph as: "If our newspapers were anti-Labour, perhaps he wouldn't worry so much about looking after his friends." (Trefgarne, George. 2001. 'BSkyB boss threatens to turn titles anti-Labour', *Daily Telegraph*, November 3 2001). The two setbacks were that BSkyB's attempt to buy Manchester

After being reminded by Murdoch that his support was conditional, when the draft Communications Bill finally arrived in May 2002, it was clear that it went a stage further in distancing the Labour government from diversity. The NUJ described the bill as the "...most significant proposed legislation on the media since the establishment of commercial broadcasting nearly 50 years ago".[1049] Yet, there was strikingly little public discussion on it. One factor in this may have been that the press and media firms were in a unique position, as Doyle puts it, to "...sustain a climate of public indifference....", about policies which would deregulate the media to their advantage.[1050] This was said to replicate the US situation.[1051]

The draft Bill covered a much broader range of issues than national press ownership and cross-ownership.[1052] Nevertheless, in these areas it was strongly deregulatory. Again, it was not just playing Conservative catch-up and following the former Tory government's position on globalisation, but going beyond this. It shared the demands of press business, including those of News Corporation. It completely turned its back on Labour's formerly like-minded reformers, the CPBF.[1053]

On cross-ownership, it moved towards the policy that the Labour leadership had pioneered in the mid 1990s, and News Corporation, among others, had championed – that the restrictions be completely removed in favour of general competition law.[1054] The 20% rule was to be scrapped for owning the five channel.[1055] This would open the possibility of a complete takeover by any of the large newspaper groups, most prominently, the

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United wholesale had been blocked and the OFT had launched an investigation into claims that BSkyB had abused its dominant position over its digital competitor, the since defunked ITV Digital.

[1049] NUJ, '*Communications Bill 2002: The NUJ 's response: Briefing for Members of Parliament*', May 14 2002.

[1050] Doyle, *Media ownership*: 177. See also Meier and Trappel: 38-59: 39.

[1051] According to one senior media communication historian, the 1996 Telecommunications Act was little debated. Robert McChesney wryly questioned why this would be the case: "...where would the citizens get informed? Only through the news media." (McChesney, *Corporate media*: 43).

[1052] See DTI/DCMS, *Policy Narrative*, DTI/DCMS, *Regulatory impact assessment.*

[1053] In a tired repetition of the rhetoric of the German Bad Godesberg agreement, Jowell argued that there was a need to get "...rid of regulation where possible but to keep them where necessary". (Tessa Jowell, Voice of the Listeners and Viewers meeting at the House of Commons, May 14 2002).

[1054] News International plc, Response to Consultation on Media Ownership Rules, DCMS website, http://www.culture.gov.uk/creative/index.html, 2002: 4.

[1055] DTI/DCMS, *Regulatory impact assessment*: 65-7.

largest – News Corp, with the attendant cross-media promotion threat. The rules would still apply to ITV.[1056] When asked, Jowell's justification for this discrepancy was that five channel had less public service obligations, was not a universal service and ownership was not an issue.[1057] She rejected claims that News Corporation was being given preferential treatment – the Government was "...proprietor neutral". However, this was to miss the point. By treating all businesses equally, it was also potentially aiding News Corp, as well as the owners of *The Mirror* and the *Daily Mail*, as Jowell herself admitted.[1058] The tension was still further heightened between business support and diversity, with the latter suffering.

The self-avowed deregulatory proposals also would open newspapers to cross-ownership in national and local radio. Importantly, the Labour government explicitly justified this as aiding press and media business and again it went beyond the former Conservative government's position.[1059] The test of public interest, related to plurality, would go. The previous government's 1995 legislation had allowed those newspaper groups with less than 20% of the press market able to acquire a percentage of the radio market. The proposals said that those groups with more than 20% of the national newspaper market could now *own* radio stations. The original stipulation was that there needed to be at least two or more *other* commercial broadcasters, as well as the BBC, reaching more than 50% of the adult population in the radio station's area.[1060] After further media business lobbying this was reduced to two commercial stations *in total*.[1061]

[1056] Great Britain Department for Culture, Media, and Sport. 2002. *A new future for communications : communications bill*. London: The Stationery Office.. See for instance, Cassy, John. 2002. 'Pundits expected the blueprint for TV and radio's future to be a fudge but it looks like a free for all', *The Guardian*, May 9 2002.

[1057] She viewed that: "A bigger and better Channel 5 would be good for British broadcasting and good for the British public. It doesn't matter who owns it if that were the achievement – that success." (Jowell, Tessa. Guardian Online chat, May 10 2002, http://talk.guardian.co.uk/).

[1058] Jowell, Tessa. Guardian Online chat, May 10 2002, http://talk.guardian.co.uk/.

[1059] It was promoted as a pro-business measure: "The removal of rules that stipulate public interest tests will remove the significant risk for businesses of spending a great deal of time and resource putting together merger proposals that are subsequently rejected." (DTI/DCMS, *Regulatory impact assessment*: 65-7).

[1060] *Ibid.*: 61-3.

[1061] DTI/DCMS, *Communications Bill*, HMSO, 2002: 411-16, Anon.. 'Local radio ownership proposals in full', *Guardian*, November 14 2002.

Also, the Labour government Bill provided for the possibility that the new overseer of this legislation, Ofcom, would review the legislation no less than every three years.[1062] This laid the process open to the spectre of constant lobbying. But more importantly, it represented a significant democratic shortfall, as the Government acknowledged. Despite this, it saw fit to ensure that Parliament would not have the final say over such important legislation. Ofcom's business bias was heightened by the appointment of City University Business School's dean, Lord Currie.[1063]

Nevertheless, initial opposition to the bill on the Labour ranks did not concentrate on the question of cross-ownership, even though this had been a theme of leading opponents outside the House, such as Professor Steve Barnett.[1064] Former Sky presenter Austin Mitchell, who had sung the News Corp's praises in the past when even the Labour leadership was hostile, was among MPs and Lords who had problems with the Bill; some of whom initially saw 'the Murdoch question' as a 'red herring'.[1065] The NUJ, which again was among leading opponents of the legislation, shared this assessment initially.[1066] More stress was placed on important provisions in the Bill for increased international broadcasting ownership and on broadcasting content regulation. This was to change.

[1062] *Regulatory impact assessment*: 65.

[1063] Although the former advisor to John Smith and Gordon Brown showed some reluctance in extending non-EU broadcaster involvement in ITV. (John Cassy, 'I'm no meddler', *Guardian*, July 29 2002).

[1064] He stated, for instance, his concern, if the Labour government went ahead with its proposals, that: "Frankly, I wouldn't care if Murdoch were Mother Teresa and the son of God rolled into one. That is simply too much power in the hands of one man...". Barnett, Steven. 2002. 'One man, one media?', *Guardian*, May 8 2002.

[1065] Private information.

[1066] In its briefing to MPs, it opposed the cross-ownership provisions, but chose not to strongly emphasise them. In the past, it had challenged the other media unions' nationalistic opposition to Murdoch. At this time, it justified its relatively muted stance on News Corporation's possible further encroachment, by arguing that business rivals greatly fuelled opposition to News Corp. (NUJ, '*Communications Bill 2002: The NUJ 's response: Briefing for Members of Parliament*', May 14 2002). A person key in formulating this NUJ policy, Tim Gopsill, justified the downplaying of Murdoch thus: "In the debate over the Communications Bill, Murdoch was overstated in the sense that he was not the only one, nor the worst, I think, because, at least, Murdoch is a good publisher. He knows how to sell newspapers. He is very good at it, very successful at it, and he has got an idea about what makes successful media, I am not saying good media, but certainly successful media...He is interested in journalism... But these [other] companies are only interested in money. So, I would personally rather have even a global proprietor, if you have to choose, one who knows something about decent newspapers." (Gopsill interview).

New Labour's attempt to railroad the legislation on newspaper business ownership of the five channel hit a potential obstacle. A joint committee of MPs and peers, headed by Lord Puttnam, recommended that the Government defer plans to allow press groups, including News Corporation, further access to five. This was among its 148 recommendations.[1067] Puttnam later argued that: "You cannot expect the government to tackle Murdoch when it needs the support of his newspapers."[1068] The committee, half of which were Labour MPs and peers, and also included the SDP's Lord McNally, divided on this question. Only one Labour MP, Brian White, sided with a Conservative to back the Government's plans for the five channel.[1069] Those Labour MPs with professional experience in his area on both sides, so to speak, backed the committee majority. Paul Farrelly had been a senior national newspaper journalist and John Grogan had worked as a Labour Party press officer.[1070] The latter appears to have become radicalised by this experience and started organising amendments to the draft Bill.[1071] Following this, opposition to the Bill by the end of 2002, at least among the unions, significantly shifted, as we shall see in a moment.

Despite this, the DCMS rejected the report's major recommendations, even before they were published. According to newspaper reports, they announced that the provisions were "...not tentative proposals, they were decisions" – rather making a mockery of the legislation's description as a "draft Bill".[1072]

[1067] It was said that the case for deregulating Channel 5 ownership had "...yet to be made". Neil Armstrong, 'When will the Americans land?' *Mediaweek*, October 4 2002, Joint Committee on the Draft Communications Bill, *Draft Communications Bill*, HMSO, July 2002.

[1068] Lord Puttnam, Hard Talk BBC News 24, October 4 2002.

[1069] It was rumoured by reliable sources that the Labour MPs on the committee had been instructed by the then No. 10 media advisor Ed Richards to support the Government but the majority, in practice, had refused. (Private information).

[1070] Joint Committee on the Draft Communications Bill, Proceedings of the Committee Relating To The Report, July 25 2002, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt200102/jtselect/jtcom.

[1071] Personal information.

[1072] "I mean what is the point in going through quite properly setting up a joint committee in this area...but then not even have the courtesy to say 'Well, this is a very interesting report, we need to have time to study it, we are not wholly persuaded by the argument, but we will look at it'. Now it has almost bloody guaranteed a great row, because it is I think that it is just discourteous. They may well stand up x months later, and say 'No it won't work because because, because'. It needs some very good explanations as to why that may be...". (Corbett interview). See also Cassy, John and Patrick Wintour. 2002. 'Blair faces fight on TV controls' and Leader, 'TV drama in the making', *The Guardian*, July 29 2002, Halpin, Anita. 2002. Communications Bill, verbatim report of TUC Congress, Rose, David., 2002. 'Blair will force Lords to accept US buyers, *Broadcast*, October 4 2002.

The Communications Bill

When the Communications Bill was published on November 20 2002, despite Government claims that it had accepted more than 120 of the Puttnam committee's 146 suggested changes, on newspaper business ownership of the five channel and foreign ownership there was no substantial modification. As indicated, on newspaper business ownership of radio, there was further liberalisation.[1073]

But importantly, Labour shifted its position from that in its first term on national newspaper policy itself. If one narrowly considered this policy in 2000, ignoring representation and cross-ownership, there was a strong case for sharing Humphreys' assessment that it differed hardly from that of the Conservatives.[1074] However, despite reports that assumed there was little in the draft Bill exclusively related to the press, this was not true.[1075]

Once again, Labour went beyond Conservative catch-up, explicitly justifying this move to appease press owners. In the Bill itself, the special merger regime – the minimal monopoly provisions that came in with the 1973 Fair Trading Act – were scrapped, as News Corp, for one, had prominently demanded.[1076] No longer would there need to be the minister's prior approval for any merger in which the newspapers involved had a total paid-for daily circulation of 500,000 or more.[1077] It is true that the act had been ineffective.[1078] Yet, rather than arguing that the rules should be more rigidly adhered to,

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[1073] DTI/DCMS, *Communications Bill*, HMSO, 2002: esp. 285-6 and 287-8. As Maggie Brown put it: "...[O]n the biggest issues...the government, led by the DTI, remains steely". (Brown, Maggie. 2002. 'Bill of rights – and wrongs', *Guardian*, November 25, 2002).

[1074] Humphreys, *New Labour*: 222. Despite all the policy development in opposition, what was striking was, as Lukes describes, the decision not to decide. (Lukes).

[1075] For this incorrect assessment see Armstrong, Neil. 2002. 'When will the Americans land?' *Mediaweek*, October 4 2002.

[1076] News International plc, Response to Consultation on Media Ownership Rules, DCMS website, http://www.culture.gov.uk/creative/index.html, 2002:11.

[1077] It was this which had been invoked at the time of the Times Newspapers takeover in the 1980s. (DTI, 'Guidance on DTI procedures for handling Newspaper Mergers', http://www.dti.gov.uk/cp/newsmergersguide.htm,).

[1078] It had proved to be ineffectual at halting press concentration, with claims that the rules were flouted. In fact, of the 175 cases, mostly concerning local titles considered by the regime since 1980, only four were refused. Also, the 1973 legislation did not include takeovers by companies and conglomerates that did not

or that international concentration should be considered, the fact that few mergers had been rejected under the law was used to justify taking it off the statute book. Indeed, the Government explicitly rationalised the move on the basis that the "...rules, and the uncertainty and costs they create, are disliked both by newspaper proprietors and by regulators".[1079] They imposed "...unnecessary burdens both on business and on the authorities".[1080] In this assessment, the considerations of both readers and the journalists' were ignored.

In its place, there was an overriding example of New Labour's trend of harmonising press law with general competition law.[1081] The takeover law would be subsumed under a new system for non-media mergers that was introduced in the Government's 2002 Enterprise Act. The Bill's 'public interest' clause would be applied if the Secretary of State considered there was a risk to plurality. One former newspaper editor concluded that this would lead to tighter regulation.[1082] Yet, there would be no automatic compulsion on ministers, now committed to a 'lighter touch', to call for an inquiry on a merger.[1083] When the minister did, Ofcom would produce a report for the Secretary of State with recommendations. Its role would be advisory. It would then be up to the Competition Commission to use general competition rules, considered by a newspaper panel that would consult with a "...representative cross section of those who may be affected...". However, again, the minister alone would decide as to a remedy, if it thought one was needed.[1084] This would again face all the problems of applying general competition law to the press that were outlined when we considered the Competition Bill earlier.

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already own UK newspapers. Thus, concerns regarding the integration of the press into the broader business community with the attendant problems that we alluded to in the introduction, not least pertaining to cross-promotion, were not addressed. Nor were the problems of transnational ownership by companies not already involved in the UK market.

[1079] *Regulatory impact assessment*: 62.
[1080] DTI, *A new future for communications*: Section 9.4.7, *Regulatory impact assessment*: 62.
[1081] Doyle, *Media ownership*: 130-1.
[1082] Preston, Peter. 2002. 'Dickie's takeover trick will never be easy again', *The Observer*, May 26, 2002.
[1083] The minister would intervene only when he or she considered there was a threat to diversity. (*Regulatory impact assessment*: 62).
[1084] These could include past mandates including altering the corporation's constitution, such as in the appointment of directors or editorial board and agreement over the operation of newspapers.
DTI/DCMS, 'Communications Bill Newspaper Mergers: The New Regime', www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/topics2/mergers.htm#newspapers: esp: 25-30, DTI/DCMS, *Communications Bill*: 310-319.

Particularly, it would now be more subject to ministerial interference than previously. There would be no consistency, as with automatic referral. Instead, the Secretary of State would only *have to* intervene if a merger lead to a company having a share of more than 25% of the newspaper market.[1085]

Questioning the globalisation notion

The Government's summary of the proposals which would eventually make it into the Communications Bill again talked of globalisation as an unstoppable objective process. It implied that globalisation was not something that governments actively created, or, at the very least, shaped. This objective process, which, seemingly, had no conscious actors, determined the legislation.[1086]

This ignored the fact that the Bill's provisions would indeed make the British broadcasting sector more open to international takeover by media conglomerates. This included, for the five channel, potential takeover by groups with a huge national newspaper interest.[1087] Thus, the *legislation* would make the British media market far more globalised than before. The Government's determinist language also justified an evolving role for the regulator Ofcom, which as 'competition in the media sector increased' would have a brief to deregulate further to bring media competition law more into line with general competition legislation. This had further implications for cross-ownership.[1088]

[1085] DTI/DCMS, Newspaper Mergers, DTI/DCMS, *Communications Bill*: 310-319.

[1086] Thus, it was suggested that: "In the communications sector, competition is often local and national in character but it is also increasingly global...Today's world combines a fast changing consumer environment with an increasingly international and competitive market place... Unnecessary regulations need to be removed wherever possible." (Hewitt, Patricia and Tessa Jowell, 'A summary of our proposals', HMSO, 2002).

[1087] The legislation did not just open up the possibility of a News Corporation takeover, it laid open the, albeit unlikely, possibility of a takeover by the multinational Trinity Mirror, now owners of the Mirror titles.

[1088] The language of general competition law permeated the draft Bill in other ways. Thus, the preamble to the Bill – its more public face – repeatedly used the term citizens, indicating an understanding of the particular role of the media in democratic debate. Yet, in the Bill, the minimal provisions for democratic representation, a merely advisory panel, was termed the Consumer Panel. Its responsibilities were concentrated on providing customer redress, rather than representing individuals in ensuring the media plays a role in providing alternative viewpoints for an informed citizenry. In fact, the terms citizen or

However, this adherence to globalisation and a determinist view of convergence can be questioned. As we saw, capital flight is seen as central to globalisation. It is incontestable that capital flight is an aspect of modern economic life. However, it was also the case that it afflicted centre-left left governments before the term globalisation was ever coined. As we saw, one former media union activist turned New Labour politician was among the host of commentators who justified the idea that the world had changed by pointing to the Mitterrand government's radical policy failure. For many, the reason was globalisation.[1089] However, Mitterrand analysts have noted that capital flight affected the French Blum government in the 1930s.[1090] Considered in this way, capital has always been 'footloose'. Analysts, most famously Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, have questioned whether the integrated nature of the world economy was a new phenomenon.[1091]

In a similar sense, globalisation arrived on the scene to justify movements already happening in press and media policy. The commitment to diversity under Kinnock was crumbling well before globalisation provided justification for this development. The

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citizens appears 16 times in the preamble text. Yet, the Bill itself used the term only once, when referring to "citizens of the European Union". In contrast, the Bill itself used the terms customer/customers 82 times and consumer/consumers 20 times. (DTI/DCMS, *Policy Narrative,* DTI/DCMS, *Draft Communications Bill*).

	Citizen/citizens	Customer/customers	Consumer/consumers
The Policy	16	4	42
Bill Contents	0	7	1
Part 1	1 when referring to "citizens of the European Union"	21	0
Part 2	0	52	11
Part 3-6	0	1	7
Schedule	0	1	1

[1089] MacShane, *French lessons*.
[1090] Ambler, J.S. 'Is the French Left Doomed To Fail?' and 'French Socialism in Comparative Perspective' in Ambler John, S., and Issues Institute for the Study of Human. 1985. *The French socialist experiment.* Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues.: 8, 10, 17, 208-10, S. Halimi, 'Less Exceptionalism than Meets the Eye', in Daley, Anthony. 1996. *The Mitterrand era : policy alternatives and political mobilization in France.* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996.: 86, 91.
[1091] Hirst Paul, Q., and Centre University of Sheffield Political Economy Research. 1995. *Globalisation in question.* Sheffield: Political Economy Research Centre, University of Sheffield.

globalisation defence was tacked on as a justification for policy positions that had preceded it, such as those linked with neo-liberalism.

Also, John Callaghan, when comparing different European social democratic parties, makes an pertinent point. If globalisation was a uniform external pressure, as the Labour leadership has suggested, then it would have been regulation in the small open economies such as those of the Scandinavian states, which would be most at threat. It is undeniable that social democracy in those states is in retreat. However, freedom of movement within the so-called 'iron cage' is still greater there than in other European economic powerhouses.[1092] And this is counter-intuitive to the reasoning of the globalisers.

When we consider state intervention to advance press plurality, the point is even more striking. As we noted in the appendix to Chapter 3, those same small open Scandinavian states have continued to lead the way in social democratic Keynesian-style interventionism to achieve a more diverse press. Such a situation suggests persistent evidence of the importance of national institutions, which goes against some of the wilder globalisation claims.

As Doyle notes, the idea that globalisation and convergence had impacted on the British media had been questioned as early as 1994.[1093] And her study of the 1996 Broadcasting Bill indicates that the economic advantages to cross-ownership, associated with globalisation, when newspaper businesses expanded into television, did not exist.[1094] In fact, Doyle's evidence suggests that political, rather than economic interests were foremost. No research was carried out to prove the convergence claims that synergy and

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[1092] Held, *Global transformations*, Callaghan, *Retreat*.

[1093] This was the gist of a submission to the Cross Media Ownership Review, which was held by the Conservative government prior to the 1996 Broadcasting Act. The Centre for Communication and Information Studies at the University of Westminster questioned much of the claimed cross-media synergy and viewed that most media firms stayed in their home market. In this, News Corporation was an exception. (Nicholas Garnham and Vincent Porter, Evidence to the Review of Cross Media Ownership, Centre for Communication and Information Studies, University of Westminster), cited in Doyle, *Media ownership*: 92.

[1094] Neither the arguments about international competitive advantage, associated with globalisation, nor the promised synergies were forthcoming. Despite the expected onset of globalisation, few companies were expecting to focus beyond the UK market despite the liberalisation. The Bill had little effect on overseas expansion. (Doyle, *Media ownership*: 118-9).

productivity would be enhanced. Instead, media groups were hostile to conducting these studies.[1095] Thus, the logical thrust of Doyle's research is that business pressure, rather than any belief that going with the grain of globalisation would bring economic benefits, motivated the Conservative government's actions.

Similarly, among the Labour government's justification for further liberalisation there is scant concrete research of the economic benefits. However, we have already noted that the Government explicitly justified changes in that they would unburden press businesses.

There is also evidence from the broader analysis of economic globalisation among media and non-media firms that a conscious globalisation strategy by governments does not necessarily lead to enhanced economic performance. Even among those writers that Held et al describe as the hyper-globalisers, it is questioned whether a governmental strategy to expand home-based multinational business and improve their economic performance adds to its home nation's economic wellbeing. In fact, they suggest the research evidence over time bears out the idea that there is a progressive divorce of national economic performance from that of the home-based multinationals.[1096] Thus, New Labour's argument that loosening ownership rules guarantees the survival of such firms, or at least strengthens the possibility for enhanced economic performance, through economies of scale, is doubly fraught with difficulty. Most importantly, it is detrimental to diversity and thus democratic debate. But also, even within New Labour's own terms, such a policy would not necessarily add to the nation's economic wealth.

In the case of the Communications Bill, the argument goes further. The opening up of the five channel to cross-ownership, including by international press conglomerates, without reciprocal agreements, did not aid British-based multinationals to expand abroad.[1097] It

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[1095] Doyle, *Media ownership*: 113-120, 172-3.
[1096] Held, *Global transformations*: 280-1.
[1097] When directly asked whether the British government would lobby the United States to reciprocate the British gesture, Jowell answered that: "The World Trade Organisation is the only route and we will pursue this to establish reciprocity but this, as things do with the WTO, will take a long time." (Jowell, Tessa. 2002. Guardian Online chat, May 10 2002, http://talk.guardian.co.uk/).

merely made it possible for foreign-based transnationals to squeeze them out in Britain. Thus, the language of aiding British international competitiveness was not that used in justifying the draft Bill. Instead, the Labour government argued that it would promote "...inward investment..." in Britain.[1098] What was needed was "... that the UK reinforces its position as one of the most attractive places for communications companies to do business".[1099] What the Government neglected to mention was that profits would go elsewhere and that in the US case, the British gesture would not be necessarily reciprocated.

Opposition in the Labour movement

For a long period, Labour's strategy on press representation was regarded as successful. Its media ownership trajectory faced relatively little effective resistance. As we have indicated, MPs and peers voiced some opposition, which delayed, but did not derail, legislation. As Curran and Seaton note, part of the reason for the weakness of opposition was the effect of the decimation of the media unions, which we outlined previously.[1100] However, as we have noted, no other agency inside Labour aside from the leadership had much influence on party policy. This meant the media unions' weakness was even more pronounced. They were less able to operate the *informal* levers of influence on the Labour government that other unions could use. These, in turn, were less effective than previously.

Thus, formally and informally, they would have to rely more on the TUC's relative collective strength. Yet, although the TUC was now greatly frozen out of policy development, the little pressure which it could have placed on the leadership on press diversity was repeatedly not exercised – a point which has been underplayed. The TUC

[1098] Jowell, Tessa. Voice of the Listeners and Viewers meeting at the House of Commons, May 14 2002, Hewitt, Patricia and Tessa Jowell, 'A summary of our proposals', HMSO, 2002.
[1099] Hewitt, Patricia and Tessa Jowell, 'A summary of our proposals', HMSO, 2002. Department of, Trade, Industry, Media Great Britain Department for Culture, and Sport. 2002. *Draft Communaications Bill*,The Stationery Office, 2002.
[1100] Curran and Seaton: 360.

general council only made a limited attempt to honour its commitment to campaign for diversity.[1101]

The TUC once again agreed in 1996 to conduct a large-scale campaign to oppose Labour's move "...towards a 'free for all'..." in cross-media ownership.[1102] This would inevitably have involved confronting the Labour Party. However, an indication of what was to happen was that the TUC general secretary John Monks expressed his 'reservation' to the congress that it could not "...go into this in a half-hearted way".[1103] This appears to be precisely what happened. A report on the proposed campaign, which had been agreed, was not forthcoming in 1997. The motion was spearheaded by the NUJ, which condemned Labour's position at its own conference and in front of the TUC.[1104] However, not being affiliated to Labour meant that it could not lead any such response in that party. This quiescence replicated the low level of industrial action in the unions in Labour's first term in office.

The pattern carried on after New Labour came into office. The 1998 congress also saw the TUC take on Labour over press and media ownership. It overwhelmingly supported a NUJ motion opposing cross-ownership.[1105] Tony Lennon, President of BECTU and then of the CPBF, slammed Labour media policy as "...actually more Tory than the Tories".[1106] The congress also again agreed to organise a conference with the media unions "...as part of a strategic TUC campaign to bring about true democracy in the media". In response, TUC general secretary John Monks referred to News Corporation's dominant press ownership, committing himself to working "...to take on this juggernaut

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[1101] For instance, the broadcasting union BECTU, the printing union GPMU, and the non-Labour affiliated NUJ opposed the Conservative government's proposals to increase cross-ownership. Yet, the general council merely indicated that it was attempting to coordinate a response with these unions and mentioned nothing about attempting to influence Labour Party policy on this question. (Trades Union Congress. Annual, Conference. 1995. *Report of the 127th annual Trades Union Congress*. London: T.U.C.).

[1102] Trades Union Congress. Annual, Conference. 1996. *Report of the 128th annual Trades Union Congress*. London: T.U.C.: 27-8.

[1103] *Ibid.*: 109.

[1104] *Ibid.*: 27-8.

[1105] Trades Union Congress. Annual, Conference. 1998. *Report of the 130th annual Trades Union Congress*. London: T.U.C.: 90-2, Anon. 'Murdoch should mark his words', *Journalist* October/November 1998.

[1106] TUC 1998: 92.

which is running through so many parts of British life".[1107] However, again, this campaign did not materialise. The 1999 and 2000 congress reports did not even allude to this concern, which Monks the year before had viewed as one affecting "...the lives of just about everyone in the nation".[1108]

Granville Williams, the editor of the CPBF's *Free Press*, and a member of the TUC's North West regional council, said attempts to resurrect the resolution were "stonewalled": "All of that was just formally noted and stuck in the filing cabinet – and that was the end of it."[1109] According to Mike Smith, head of the TUC Secretariat, the TUC saw itself as playing a limited role as it had other priorities and limited resources. It seems that it was up to the media unions themselves to carry out the campaigning.[1110]

However, small pockets of resistance to this view appeared in many media unions, notably in the NUJ and the broadcasting union BECTU. As we have seen, the NUJ was at the forefront of opposition. It attempted to mobilise dissent among other unions.[1111] The tenor of its disagreement subtly changed during the Bill's passage. Although broadcasting content and defence of public service broadcasting was still a priority, its opposition to ownership changes strengthened. The printers' union, the GPMU, also registered its opposition and offered its parliamentary lobbyist's services.[1112]

With this pressure, the TUC again overwhelmingly passed a motion at its 2002 congress, proposed by Equity and seconded by the NUJ. This indicated its fear concerning further media concentration. It opposed relaxing ownership rules – at least until reciprocal legislation was adopted in other countries. There was again a call for the TUC general council to make representations and work with unions on a campaign opposing sections

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[1107] *Ibid.*: 91, 92.
[1108] *Ibid.*: 92, Trades Union Congress. Annual, Conference. 1999. *Report of the 131st annual Trades Union Congress*. London: T.U.C., Trades Union Congress. Annual, Conference. 2000. *Report of the 132nd annual Trades Union Congress*. London: T.U.C..
[1109] Granville Williams interview.
[1110] Mike Smith, interview with author, October 1 2002.
[1111] The NUJ was helping organising coordinating meetings with the communications union, the CWU, BECTU, Connect, Equity and the CPBF. Tony Lennon, of BECTU was the convenor. (Personal Information)
[1112] Gopsill interview.

of the Bill. The NUJ, which was one of a number of unions that had seen a left turn in their leadership, reported to the first TUC general council following the conference on this.[1113] However, the TUC's effect in the Labour Party has been limited for reasons we will reconsider in the conclusion.

Despite the Bill's importance, there was no motion taken on it at the 2002 Labour Party conference. The reasons for this were procedural as much as directly political. It was unlikely the conference could have taken an emergency motion on the Bill because of its timing, for reasons discussed in the first part of this chapter. Also, Labour's rolling programme had not set in motion such a discussion on the media to be taken at the conference.[1114] Such was the low priority given by party activists to media reform by this stage, it is not clear that it would have been prioritised as one of the few emergency motions in any case. Nevertheless, this also indicated traditional activists' demoralisation about Labour Party action in the face of the new procedures and a classic problem with the new procedure when discussing relevant, but not emergency, motions.

[1113] TUC, *General Purposes Committee Report to Congress*, TUC, 2002: 23. Tony Dubbins, 'Fighting against media monopoly', *Morning Star*, October 1 2002, personal information. Anita Halpin of the TUC, seconding the motion argued that: "New Labour has gone even further than the Tories dared in the relaxation of ownership rules." (Anita Halpin, Communications Bill, verbatim report of TUC Congress, http://www.tuc.org.uk/congress/tuc-5617-f0.cfm#tuc-5617-10). Others that had seen a shift included the CWU, Britain's second-biggest union, Amicus, transport union, the RMT and the civil service union the PCS.

[1114] A discussion on democracy, which would include the media within it, was scheduled to be discussed at the 2003 conference and agreed in 2004. (Labour Party, Democracy, and Commission Citizenship Policy. 2002. *Democracy & citizenship : second-year consultation document*. London: The Labour Party, 2000.)

CONCLUSION

We shall discuss how this all relates to the 'classic texts' on Labour policymaking power as part of the concluding Chapter 8. However to conclude here, we shall extremely briefly consider Labour's trajectory.

We considered earlier that New Labour's communitarian influence would demand that with the rights of press business come responsibilities. Philosopher Onora O'Neil has argued forcefully, put simply, that an acceptance of a theory of obligations impacts on communications.[1115] She argues that accepting the notion of obligations leads to a state commitment to "...developing and sustaining institutions...", fostering communication diversity and protecting voices faced with the danger of marginalisation.[1116] This is the concern which Labour formerly identified itself with, notwithstanding its difficulties and contradictions with representation.

Yet it is a commitment the Labour government seems to have discarded. New Labour went even further than previous Conservative regimes dared in relaxing ownership rules. The Communications Bill represented the failure of the hopes of generations of media activists who had put their faith in a Labour government to deliver communication diversity.

Third Way advocates have argued that one reason for the decline of traditional social democracy is that its interest in equality was in conflict with policies to create cultural pluralism.[1117] Yet, there is an irony here. As we have seen, left variants of social democracy, especially the Labour new left, were concerned about cultural diversity and the representation of it in the media. For all the problems concerning its solutions, this part of the left was actively involved in trying to create strategies to provide for plural representation through diverse ownership and increased participation. In contrast, New

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[1115] Onora O'Neil, 'Practices of toleration', in Lichtenberg, Judith. 1990. *Democracy and the mass media : a collection of essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.: 155-85.
[1116] *Ibid.*: 173.
[1117] See, for instance, Giddens, Anthony. 2000. *The third way and its critics*. Malden, Mass.: Polity Press.: 85-8.

Labour's 'actual existing Third Way' stripped away some of the few remaining regulations concerning press ownership and cross-ownership. It made possible increased domination by fewer multinational corporate players, greater international concentration, and less cultural plurality and ownership diversity.[1118]

8. Conclusion

Labelling someone an optimist or a pessimist can often be unhelpful. However, it is striking that Curran, who was a Labour Party member for many years treats the struggle for a diverse and democratic media within the party sympathetically but rather pessimistically.[1119] Freedman declares himself to be a socialist outside the Labour Party and cites a series of authors openly dismissive of Labour left currents. Yet, the breadth of internal radical discussion on broadcasting policy pleasantly surprised him.[1120] The glass was more than half empty for Curran and approaching half full for Freedman.

This study has taken the latter emphasis when it comes to press policy. We are now aware that for a myriad of reasons, the glass is at low level. More recent calls for a press advertising tax, for instance, seem to be a product of a different age.[1121] However, if we consider the history of the last 30 years from Curran's normative policymaking perspective, it is important to note the liquid that was in the glass, rather than just its disappearance. In downplaying, particularly, his own pioneering work, Curran is understandably, but unnecessarily, self-effacing and reflective of his own personal sense of failure. One factor in this, the crushing of optimism felt when Labour came into power in 1997, has contributed to the whole enterprise being unreasonably diminished.

To downplay these important moments in Labour Party thought can give the wrong impression. It can mistakenly leave the reader fitting this historical sweep into the same perspective as *New Media, New Policies*, which reduces Labour Party discussion on the media before New Labour to *The people and the media* and two pages in the 1991 *Arts and the Media* pamphlet.[1122]

[1119] Curran, *Press Reformism.*
[1120] Freedman, 2000.
[1121] However, even here, it is important to note there has been discussion of recent implementation of this demand in other countries. Some US states have said to have implemented an advertising tax, including on parts of the media. (Tomkins, Richard 'Let's ban advertising. Only joking, let's tax it', *Financial Times*, May 16, 2003).
[1122] Collins and Murroni: 3-4. See also Freedman, 2003: 2.

Leo Panitch and Colin Leys' important work on the Labour Party attempts to recover its history from the revisionism that saw New Labour triumphing over an undifferentiated old Labour of Dennis Healey and Tony Benn or, in our narrower arena, Gerald Kaufman and James Curran.[1123] In an extremely modest sense, this work is a contribution to this project, which notes the profound problems with the 'New Left' solutions, but also the quiescence of the old Labour right and New Labour's neo-liberal reality. We shall return to this point later. But first, we shall consider the evolution of Labour policy for democratic participation in the press.

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

As we saw in Chapter 1, a number of writers have held that diverse media ownership is needed for democracy. However, even some strident advocates downplayed the role of democratic control in aiding political democracy.[1124] Nevertheless, this work has considered the importance of participative control for political democracy. The thesis attempted to consider it in relation to the various media models put forward.

It is true, as has been argued, that no society can guarantee that all communicators can express all possible content in all contexts. Yet, as Onora O'Neil indicates, one justification for state media regulation is that, in its absence, unaccountable businesses will regulate access instead.[1125]

For a time, Labour agreed to legislation that would have aided participative democracy for those working in the press industry, at least. These conceptions for democratic ownership of the press are associated more closely with the New Left/Marxist and radical democratic/social market models. As was indicated, the broader question of employees' democratic involvement in industry had excited some Western European social

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[1123] Panitch and Leys. A more critical reading of the New Left legacy, influenced by Panitch and Leys, has been provided more recently by Wickham-Jones. (Wickham-Jones, New Left).
[1124] Thus, McChesney's revelatory short consideration of this subject, which sees 'participatory self-government' as his goal, little considers this area, mentioning accountability twice only fleetingly as a target. (McChesney, *Corporate media*: 66, 67).
[1125] O'Neil: 178.

democratic parties in the 1970s, as part of the New Left upsurge. This was reflected in British Labour Party policy. However, in the early 1970s, this was not shared by the journalists' representatives, which, although not affiliated to the Labour Party, were involved in policy development. The NUJ leadership's position on the study group had fused elements of a classical liberal pluralist and the social market model. However, this traditional view was under pressure. The New Left Free Communications Group was by then influencing the Labour Party as well as the NUJ. One journalist and FCG supporter, Neal Ascherson, used the study group to call for direct forms of staff democracy, which echoed the views of Raymond Williams and of other Marxists, although not their revolutionary intent. Although most of the group supported workers' participation in the press, there was a dissenting social democratic voice. This division was reflected in *The people and the media* where general statements of intent did not lead to clear policy. While it called for participation, it did not specify how this would be operationalised.

As for broader involvement than staff democracy, O'Malley indicates that the New Left connection to *The people and the media* extended to the demand for accountability.[1126] However, we saw that this again divided the committee and, although there was a concern to fund newspapers that met a community need, industrial democracy was prioritised. While left critics bemoaned that there was not enough emphasis on journalistic participation, they were on stronger ground criticising the little consideration of broader involvement.

By the time of the Royal Commission, the Labour Party both publicly and in its policy positions supported industrial democracy in the press, reflecting the New Left, Marxist and some social market models. Yet, the conference policy went beyond this, towards other Marxist and social market models, minus their revolutionary implications. It cautiously considered reader involvement. The Labour government's involvement in the closed shop legislation highlighted potential tensions within New Left notions, when it was shown that greater industrial democracy could clash with public participation and access.

[1126] O'Malley: 89.

However, this did not stymie demands for journalistic participation. The Labour government did this. It shelved both the demands for journalist autonomy made by the 1977 Royal Commission on the Press and the commission's Minority Report, which the Labour Party had promoted, which went further than the commission in this respect.

The left's radical challenge to Keynesianism and the democratic upsurge in the party again put press worker control on the agenda at the 1979 party conference. Yet, calls did not extend to the broader community. Nevertheless, this left momentum was relatively short-lived. An attempt to put flesh on this proposal in the party's Media Study Group, which went beyond Williams' model towards again considering broader community control was scuppered. It faced reluctant media unions, with their maximalist approach leading to minimal conclusions. This was combined with some MPs' reluctance based on fears of business resistance.

In the 1980s, Labour shifted from the municipal socialists approach, reflected in the 1983 conference motion. This combined Marxist models of reader accountability with radical models in fusing marketised and collectivist forms. Livingstone's attempt to revive this approach was spurned, with a print union representative spearheading this.

Instead, as the appendix to Chapter 5 showed, the unions backed the industrial right of reply, which minimally reflected Williams' Marxist model. Yet, with its implicit acceptance of private ownership of the press, it also looked to radical schemas. Eventually, party policy concentrated on a legal right of reply. Labour made a last attempt to provide a statutory right of reply with the support of the frontbench during the Smith interregnum.

The legal right of reply did not require a restructuring of the press. One analyst of Labour media policy saw this as an advantage. It would aid public acceptance of the measure.[1127]

[1127] Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 93.

However, Freedman sees it as a retreat.[1128] This work has argued that taking the legal path was a problem, but not quite in the way Freedman envisaged. It was a huge step forward from the self-regulation of the Press Council regime, with "...independence from any external accountability beyond the market".[1129] However, in *some* options considered, it substituted this for decision-making overseen by state appointees or judges connected to the state, rather than broader public or staff participation. This reflected a radical pluralist model and a social democratic tradition. It attempted to seek public accountability, rather than direct nationalised state control, as had John Keane. It attempted to be representative. Yet, also, in some variants, it followed the social democratic public service tradition in its attachment to the state and was a policy transfer from social democratic governments and those to their right. It failed to become policy and the Labour hierarchy abandoned it. Instead, the Labour government adopted notions of a marketised minimal participation, with the idea of a subordinate Consumer Council in the Communications Bill. But the council's remit was not intended to include newspapers.

[1128] Freedman, 2000: 183.

[1129] Seymour-Ure, Colin. 1996. *The British press and broadcasting since 1945*. Oxford: Blackwell.: 242. See also O'Malley and Soley.

DIVERSITY, LABOUR PARTY REPRESENTATION AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE PRESS OWNERSHIP POLICY

The relationship between diversity and Labour Party representation has been a theme throughout the time that this work covers. Yet, Curran and Freedman, as insightful writers, have downplayed or consciously avoided the question of political communications. Downplaying the question of the importance of this in order to gain Labour Party representation can affect how the last 30 years of press policy is considered. In Curran's assessment, he particularly understates the role of four electoral defeats on the Labour movement.[1130]

However, this author shares the view of numerous commentators that the mass media has become increasingly central to politics. Jerry Palmer considers there to be a political marketing literature consensus that media relations are central to modern politics and communication functionaries are vital to parties and governments.[1131] We saw this was the case with Labour.

Other writers have referred to representation and diversity from the mid 1980s onwards.[1132] Academics who came to be associated with the left shared the alarm about the lack of Labour representation.[1133]

To repeat, this work has argued that the division over the aim of Labour representation in national newspapers and diversity is integral to explaining the tensions in Labour press

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[1130] Curran, *Press Reformism*.

[1131] Palmer, Jerry. 2002. 'Smoke and mirrors: is that the way it is? Themes in political marketing', *Media, Culture & Society* 24:345-363.: 348, 359, 360.

[1132] Brian McNair identifies that press observers by the 1980s saw the inequality in newspaper support for Labour as a problem, in addition to the historic concern with concentration. (McNair, *Journalism and democracy*: 146-8). One close observer, Nicholas Jones, deals with much similar material, when it comes to political communication and the relationship of No. 10 to News International. But, as a non-academic writer, he is not systematic in theorising his ideas and in teasing out causal connections for shifts in Labour press ownership policy – and nor should he be expected to be. (Jones, *Sultans*. and Jones, *Control freaks*.)

[1133] See, for example, Peter Golding and Graham Murdock, 'Confronting the Market: Public Intervention and Press Diversity', in Curran, *The British Press*: 75-93, 82.

ownership policy. This tension was not just from the time of Kinnock onwards, but also in the 1970s and the early 1980s.

Thus, the first major discussion in the party on the media in 1972 was a response to perceived press hostility, particularly directed towards the trade unions. And even while the first media study group was deliberating, the more public expression of this discussion justified it in terms of creating a particularly Labour press, rather than a more diverse one.

Yet, there was also a broader anxiety on the Labour left that the press structure challenged the notion of pluralism in the democratic system, irrespective of the specifics of the Labour Party's press treatment.[1134] Nevertheless, this was confused. On the one hand, the New Left transcended the mainstream Labour concern with party bias in the press to emphasise the broader problem of exclusion of the public's opinions. O'Malley also mentions this. The Home Policy committee and its report reflected that shift.[1135] Yet, this work detailed that the tension between these two interrelated positions was not eradicated. Instead, the New Left ascendancy merely masked this. The most prominent academic Labour left advocate, for instance, saw the need to tailor diversity concerns to appeal to those whose interest was in a Labour movement press.[1136]

So, to advance diversity, *The people and the media* reflected the strain between the public service conception and Scandinavian-style interventionism. The methods it envisaged for intervention reflected the social market interventionist model. Yet, Benn insisted that the document should describe itself as being in the public service tradition. This reflected the tension. Most trade unionists on the group were one side. They wanted better Labour movement representation. This idea fitted in better with a public service conception, which wanted to balance the press. Some from the New Left tradition were on the other side. The academic Curran most notably reflected this. Their major interest was with directly diversifying the newspaper market.

[1134] Holland, Countervailing Press Power, 94-123: 107-8.
[1135] O'Malley: 89.
[1136] See, for instance, Curran, Different approaches: 89-135, 124-5.

This tension between the social democratic and New Left traditions and between Labour representation and diversity should not be overstated. Those involved were not necessarily even aware of it. And Benn notably was on one side in the diversity discussion and on the other on the question of democratic participation.

Yet, the tension between representation and other press policies continued with the Royal Commission on the Press, initiated by the 1974 Labour government. The model the party put forward for diversity was that of an Advertising Revenue Board. Nevertheless, an indication of the division between the Labour Party and the Labour government on this policy transfer from a Scandinavian social market model was that this solution was only put forward tentatively by Labour officials. The Labour administration did not act on the plans when they came to address the report.

Instead, the Labour officials were motivated, again, to provide for Labour movement representation, rather than diversity. Labour leader Wilson had set up the Royal Commission, in part, as a response to the end of his long newspaper honeymoon. Those on the NEC and its representatives on the Royal Commission on the Press emphasised the point that they wanted to change the structure of the market in order to provide 'fairer' newspaper coverage. However, the problem for that aim was that the effect of the schemes would have been to have increased diversity. They *may* have enhanced Labour movement representation. But they wouldn't have had a predictable political outcome.[1137] The schemes would not have guaranteed anything like political parity.

For that to happen, there needed to be some sort of control of the outlets. This could have either come through state control from above – through a public service conception; or it could have come from below through participation in the newspapers' control; or there could have been a combination of both. The first approach was attempted after Labour left office in 1979. The Meacher and Mullin proposals for an Independent Press

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[1137] As Seymour-Ure says, a government press subsidy would have kept Conservative-supporting titles running, possibly at a cost to the Labour-backing *Daily Mirror*. (Seymour-Ure, *British press and broadcasting*: 215).

Authority were in the public service tradition and eventually became party policy, though they did not make it into the manifesto. Meacher and Mullin went beyond 'broad-brush' attempts to achieve diversity to attempt to obtain balance and thus representation of Labour and the left. In doing so, they indicated the huge problems of attempting to achieve balance in the press and reflected difficulties to do with the public service model's positive view of employing the state's coercive force.

A less problematic solution came with the Open Press Authority concept, which reflected the Scandinavian social market model. Yet, by the time of the 1983 election this had been discarded. Nevertheless, the manifesto commitment was a sea-change from that of four years before. Its anti-monopoly law went beyond the liberal pluralist model, while its commitment to a launch fund was a policy transfer from Scandinavian-style social democracy.

After the perceived part that the newspapers played in Labour's defeat in 1983, the emphasis in this last radical phase was again on answering this bias, as much as diversity. The Labour conference again put its faith in the flawed public service model IPA. It placed as much stress on achieving balance as plurality. Yet, the *News on* Sunday's collapse dealt a huge blow to attempts to bring greater Labour movement representation with some control by the movement itself. After this, some unions became less enthusiastic about promoting Labour through structural change.

As intervention became politically unacceptable, those who wanted Labour representation looked to another attractive method. Aaron Davies has tentatively suggested that the unions concentrated on political communications to deal with press bias.[1138] This work has provided some limited confirmation of this but has more importantly suggested that the Labour leadership made a similar assessment. The new media strategy's by-product was a renewed pressure to seek press business approval – to

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[1138] The emphasis on backing an alternative press was a product of another era. There was a strategy to professionalise and increase the resources of union PR operations, which was regarded as successful. (Davis, Aeron. 2002. *Public relations democracy : public relations, politics, and the mass media in Britain.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.: 114-5, 125-149).

not upset the apple cart by bringing forward proposals for structural change. Backbenchers had already advised Kinnock that Labour's case would be advanced if it accommodated to News Corporation over cross-media ownership. In the retreat from press ownership interventionist policies, we are entering the difficult territory of anticipated reactions. In Lukes' terms, there was the question of non-decisions, to avoid aspects of press ownership being considered.[1139] This was not apparent, even to some of the actors involved – Corbett being one. Yet, as the higher echelons of the party abandoned interventionism in other areas, at least after 1987, they placed less emphasis on structural change and much more on political communications.

The shift from intervention had happened under Kinnock. The demand for intervention was not just some left fetish. This work indicated that proposals that just restricted existing ownership could well lead to papers being shuffled around existing firms, as Negrine argues. Worse still, jettisoned newspapers could go to the wall.[1140] Such proposals would need to be accompanied by some sort of launch body for new publications. They would also need to protect the body's independence from the state and its democratic legitimacy; going beyond appointing representatives. Nevertheless, it is a measure of how far Labour has departed from previous discussions on diversity that such a limited measure now seems utopian, outlandish, impossible and even dangerous in party circles.

Labour thinkers had grappled with the problem for democratic expression of there being a dual market in newspaper production, which heavily disadvantages low-income readers. However, this work has confirmed what Curran suggests – that there is no way of redistributing advertising revenue which does not have potential problems to be dealt with over time. The answers that he advocated in the 1980s; to impose a levy on all advertising to finance new publications or, more recently; to fund such a press from the

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[1139] Lukes.

[1140] Negrine: 55-66. It is a testament to the continuing ingenuity of James Curran's vision that in more recent years he has suggested the National Lottery as a possible new funding source. (Curran, *Policy for the press*).

lottery, seem appealing.[1141] However, this would not directly deal with the dual market. Such titles financed by such a levy would still face the problem of seeking advertising revenue. A levy placed on papers charging high advertising rates, to deal with this, faced the wrath of companies producing those currently over-subsidised newspapers aimed at high-income readers. There would instead need to be subsidies for low-income reader newspapers with a strong current affairs content, as Curran suggested.[1142] Such a scheme is not acceptable in the political climate at the time of writing. Nevertheless, that this is the case is not a failing of past Labour policymakers. Instead, it represents a democratic flaw of a market system that makes press provision so skewed against lower-waged readers.

[1141] Curran, Different approaches: 89-135, Curran, *Policy for the press.*
[1142] Curran, Different approaches: 89-135, 119.

Why was there this shift from more radical models of diversity and democratic control under New Labour? There were also broader reasons for the evolution than just Labour's renewed emphasis on political communications. This work argued it was a reflection of its general drift to the right with the demise of Keynesianism and the rejection of employee democratic control. It was affected by the general loss of confidence in public intervention following the collapse of the Soviet Union, union demoralisation and the impact of Thatcherism. This thesis also indicated that New Labour's determination to converge press policy with general competition policy was in line with EU policy, as has been indicated elsewhere.[1143]

However, this work has suggested that an overriding reason for this shift was that the Labour leadership accepted that it needed to go with the grain of globalisation. Others, from different perspectives, have previously argued that New Labour accepted the dictats of globalisation.[1144] It has been implied that this influenced its media policy.[1145] But this work has argued this linked with New Labour's particular concern with representation.

One question is whether globalisation of the press and media is a qualitatively new phenomenon and the only tendency at work in the world economy. As Kevin Williams indicates, there is concentration, conglomeration and internationalisation of the British media. However, it does not automatically follow that there is simply economic globalisation, as he implies.[1146] This is not just a question of semantics. Globalisation indicates a distinct new economic order. It is true that technology is eroding traditional

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[1143] It is also in line with deregulatory moves in other countries such as the United States. (Doyle, *Media ownership*: 31-2, 150, chapter 10, Doyle, *Understanding*: 169). See also Humphreys, *New Labour*: 231.
[1144] Anderson and Mann: esp. 338, Daniel Wincott, 'European Social Democracy and New Labour' in Leonard, Dick, and Society Fabian. 1999. *Crosland and new Labour*. Basingstoke: Macmillan in association with Fabian Society.: 189, Shaw, *1979*: Chapter 4 esp. 194-*5*, Callaghan, *Retreat*: 156-165.
[1145] Freedman argues this. He discusses globalisation and, to an extent, relates it to New Labour's adoption of the 'Third Way'. (Freedman, 2000: 221-2, 246-7, 259-64). In this sense, this work only partly agrees with Seymour-Ure when he argues that the Communications Bill that it :"...looked more like a pragmatic response to corporate pressure than the result of core Labour beliefs (new or old)." (Seymour-Ure, *Prime ministers*: 15).
[1146] Williams, *Get me a murder a day*: 241-2.

market boundaries. Internationalisation and convergence have accelerated. However, that is not the same as claiming that there is "borderless economy", as Doyle puts it.[1147] This is particularly true for newspapers. Clearly, the on-line versions may change this, yet the *Financial Times* is one of a few print newspapers in the whole of Europe that has sizeable international sales.

This work has accepted that the world economy has changed, one aspect being the liberalisation of capital movements. Yet, before globalisation was talked of, there was a significant post-war internationalisation of British press ownership, as Seymour-Ure points out.[1148] Indeed, as Panitch and Leys and Callaghan indicate, from different perspectives, the Labour left considered the implications of economic internationalisation more generally before Labour right considered globalisation.[1149] This was also true for the press as this work indicated. It was precisely concern about the international economy's effect on the press that prompted left media activists to call for government intervention.

This work's insistence on the role of the subject and that there are counter-tendencies to globalisation situates it alongside writers such as Colin Hay and David Marsh, and Peter Taylor.[1150] It sets it apart from hyper-globalisers such as Reich and 'radicals' such as Giddens.[1151] It queries the notion, along with others, that there is no alternative to neo-liberal restructuring, as the dominant understanding of globalisation dictates.[1152]

[1147] Doyle, *Media ownership*: 2.
[1148] Seymour-Ure, National Press: 265-6.
[1149] Panitch and Leys accept the existence of the phenomenon and wish to challenge it, but Callaghan is more sceptical. (Panitch and Leys: 263-264, 269, Callaghan, *Retreat*: esp. Chapter 7).
[1150] Colin Hay and David Marsh, 'Introduction: Demystifying Globalization', in Hay, Colin, David Marsh, and Group University of Birmingham Political Sociology Research. 2000. *Demystifying globalization*. Basingstoke: Macmillan in association with POLSIS, University of Birmingham, 2000.: 1-20, Peter J Taylor, 'Ization of the World: Americanization, Modernization and Globalization', in Hay and Marsh: 49-70.
[1151] Reich Robert, B. 1992. *The work of nations : preparing ourselves for 21st century capitalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992., Giddens, Anthony. 1998. *The third way : the renewal of social democracy*. Malden, Mass. ; Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998. and Giddens, Anthony. 2000. *The third way and its critics*. Malden, Mass.: Polity Press..
[1152] Hay, Colin, and Matthew Watson. 1999. "Globalisation: 'Sceptical' Notes on the 1999 Reith Lectures." *Political Quarterly* 70:418 - 425., Callaghan, *Retreat*, Glyn, Andrew. 1995. 'Social Democracy and Full Employment', *New Left Review* 211:33-55., Glyn, 'Internal and External Constraints on Egalitarian Policies', in Baker, Dean, A. Epstein Gerald, Robert Pollin, Institute Political Economy Research, and

Specifically, it agrees with Kevin Williams that "...media futures are not predetermined...".[1153] Nevertheless, despite the fact that there was no rigid 'iron cage', the work has argued that New Labour accepted a specific globalisation agenda.[1154]

However, this thesis has gone beyond arguing that New Labour's acceptance of globalisation simply determined its press policy. It indicated that an important consideration has been that conscious actors shaped its tendency to neo-liberal globalisation. As was indicated, following Fairclough, neo-liberal globalisation has not been the product of impersonal forces.[1155] It has required decisions by governments, such as the Labour administration, to liberalise press and cross-ownership laws – and transnationals have been conscious actors in the process. This work argued that the same was true of Labour's press and media policy. Labour's policy went with the grain of globalisation but was shaped to appeal to other actors; most notably, business. Thus, even a writer who accepts the 'borderless economy' notion, Gillian Doyle, argues that appealing to the key media corporations was central to New Labour's policy.[1156] We have seen that the New Labour government itself specifically indicated that it geared some provisions of the 2002 Communications Bill to deal with the concerns of "...the newspaper proprietors...", as well as regulators.[1157]

Amherst University of Massachusetts at. 1998. *Globalization and progressive economic policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.: 391-409, Hirst Paul, Q., and Grahame Thompson. 1999. *Globalization in question : the international economy and the possibilities of governance*. Cambridge, UK ; Oxford, OX, UK ; Cambridge, MA, USA: Polity Press : Blackwell Publishers.: Chapter 7.

[1153] Williams gives the example of the French government's determination to defend its indigenous film industry in the GATT treaty talks as an example. (Williams, *Get me a murder a day*: 10).

[1154] As Daniel Wincott argues, it may be the case that globalisation's effect is less in its irresistible effect but more 'as a cluster of *ideas*' which impacted on New Labour. (Daniel Wincott, 'European Social Democracy and New Labour', in Leonard, Dick, and Society Fabian. 1999. *Crosland and new Labour*. Basingstoke: Macmillan in association with Fabian Society.: 189). It may be true that the adoption of the Third Way

[1155] Fairclough: 23-34.

[1156] As Doyle indicates of the draft Communication Bill: "For New Labour just as for the previous Conservative administration, concerns about pluralism appear to count for little (beyond the level of rhetoric) while the main impetus guiding actual changes of policy is a desire to accommodate the strategic interests and concerns of major UK commercial media players." (Doyle, Gillian. 2002c, 'What's 'new' about the future of communications? An evaluation of recent shifts in UK media ownership policy', *Media, Culture & Society* :715-724.: 715). See also Doyle, *Media ownership*: 2.

[1157] If we remember, the justification for scrapping the special merger regime of the 1973 Fair Trading Act was that: "...rules, and the uncertainty and costs they create, are disliked both by newspaper proprietors and by regulators". They imposed "...unnecessary burdens both on business and on the authorities". (*Regulatory impact assessment*: 62).

Thus, globalisation and neo-liberal policy transfer were over-riding factors in the shift in ownership legislation. However, along with the influence of the EU to harmonise with general competition law, the Labour government's understanding of globalisation led it to closely align with the newspaper firms. The alignment could have been mere coincidence but has looked suspiciously like collaboration, related to the concern with Labour representation.

It can be seen that the party, and the TUC in practice, prioritised representation over the more abstract questions of diversity and democracy. And, in terms of representation, this was, for a time, a very successful strategy. If we understand that for many in the Labour movement the 'press problem' was simply one of representation, then it had been 'solved'. Thus, we have an additional explanation as to why party demands for press ownership policy has weakened. There has been a resigned perception that it is worth achieving Labour representation by other means. For the unions, this links to their long-term concern to create a Labour movement title, which took precedence over diversity, before being abandoned.

Interestingly, some commentators have reflected Labour policymakers past conflation of diversity and representation in assessing this new climate. McNair considers that because more newspapers now support the Labour Party in government then there is a "...more diverse, even pluralistic press".[1158] Even as distinguished a commentator as Curran appeared to share this concept of representation and has conflated it with concentration.[1159]

Yet, increased representation does not necessarily equal further political plurality, or as we have seen, increased ownership diversity. As many observers from different viewpoints acknowledge, there is now far less political diversity between the parties than

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[1158] McNair, *Journalism and democracy*: 149-50, 164-5.

[1159] So, he argues that the British press was not representative of public opinion because it backed the Conservatives more strongly than the popular vote in the 1980s. And he suggests the reason for this was ownership concentration and market entry barriers. (Curran, *Policy for the press*: 11-2).

in the 1980s. And McNair points to the 1980s as a time when there were concerns over representation. It is only partly the case that if the Labour Party's political position shifts, and the newspapers react to these changed circumstances, that a more diverse set of views is then represented. This work considered that the Labour leadership's rightward drift in press policy reflected a more general pro-market shift that the pro-Tory press had previously championed against Labour. In this sense, it questions the notion that, as McNair suggests, the 'mainstream left' is in government. Although this work has not systematically addressed the question, the evidence presented tends to challenge the idea that New Labour is in the mainstream Western European social democratic tradition.[1160] Equally, this thesis has challenged the notion that the Labour Party members, 'mainstream' or otherwise, have as much influence on Labour Party policy as in the past.

Furthermore, if we shift the argument to consider Labour *movement* representation, which is what animated many in the Labour Party discussions, it is not clear that most newspaper groups have lessened their hostility towards the unions. The bitter struggles for union recognition in the newspaper industry, post-Wapping, suggest this. This is not to suggest that diversity could credibly be measured in terms of Labour *movement* representation. Rather, this work has indicated that in terms of ownership diversity, there is little plurality. The problems of ownership concentration remain, as McNair himself acknowledges.[1161]

The notion of representation has its problems. If representation is meant to mean that which fairly represents the voting patterns of the electorate, then the press now is representative of Labour and less so of Liberal Democrats, for instance. If it is meant to be representative of the opinions of the people in society, then this may not always be the case, at least when it comes to political coverage. This is despite classical liberal claims that newspapers need to reflect the views of their readers in order to survive. It is true, for instance, as McNair suggests, that the left on the political stage is more marginalised than

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[1160] While Stefan Berger is one who sees New Labour as a return to the Western European social democratic tradition, this work's evidence sides with Callaghan, who rejects this view convincingly. Callaghan cites an EU battle over state intervention to combat unemployment as one example of this divide, for instance. (Callaghan, *Retreat*: 165).
[1161] McNair, *Journalism and democracy*: 217.

in the past. However, if a market where there is no explicitly socialist title has satisfied the tastes of all consumers, then this assumes that there are very few socialists in the UK. Yet, there are indications that this is incorrect.[1162]

The extent to which the left's anti-capitalist message has found a chord among that sizeable wave of activists challenging globalisation in its different forms can be debated. More broadly, Davis concludes from polling evidence that British citizens are more socially-oriented than the pro-business newspapers and political parties.[1163] In addition, opinion polls conducted during the 2001 election indicated that the state of the public services was the chief concern of those polled, they were suspicious of privatisation of these services and were prepared to increase tax to pay for improvements.[1164] Contrast this with what the biggest selling daily newspaper's own manifesto had to say on these matters.[1165] Coming back to the narrower point, however, diversity cannot be equated with Labour Party representation in the press.

Changes to policymaking under Kinnock and Blair have indicated that the two are not synonymous. The Labour Party developed new techniques to make the press 'fairer' to Labour. In the process, the demands for diversity fell by the wayside. Along with other factors, some saw that the demands had become less important for getting a 'fair deal' and were actually counterproductive for getting that deal.

[1162] An indication that such a view is incorrect is the small but significant support given to the tiny far-left Socialist Alliance, which polled 100,000 votes in the UK in the 2002 General Election. This demonstrable support should be allied with that of many others who decided neither to vote or to vote Green or to reluctantly vote Labour. The support for the Scottish Socialist Party is another indication.

[1163] Regarding tax, privatisation, welfare spending and employee rights, Davis' view is that "...the mass of consumer citizens are fairly antagonistic towards the excesses of neo-liberal policy-making ... They might vote for pro-business parties, buy pro-business papers and support the capitalist system per se, but the majority of the UK population are rather more 'liberal' and society-orientated than those papers and parties." (Davis, *Public relations democracy*: 179).

[1164] Rod Brookes, Justin Lewis and Karin Wahl-Jorgensen, 'The media representation of public opinion: British television news coverage of the 2001 General Election', Paper presented to the PSA Media Group conference September 10-11 2001.

[1165] "The lesson of privatisation applies as much to health care and education as it does to airlines and telephones. Commercial competition is good for everyone. So Labour's medium term goal should be to take no more than 37p in the Pound in taxes, leaving workers more control over what they earn." (Trevor Kavanagh, George Pascoe-Watson and David Wooding, 'The Sun's Election Manifesto', *Sun*, May 9 2001).

An important indicator of this was that the most visible sign of the representation strategy was to woo the largest press business. Again, New Labour's understanding of globalisation was the determining factor when calling for the end of all cross-ownership rules. But it was explicitly shaped by its interest in Labour representation – to further ingratiate Labour with its one supporter in the press at this time, the Mirror Group. It also looked suspiciously like cooperation that this call happened as the 'understanding' between New Labour and the News Corporation was developing.

This work considered reasons why press businesses were likely to be more inclined to support Labour. The work questioned the notion that class dealignment of the press businesses or, as some writers have put it, the loosening of the ideological moorings of the newspapers, was the reason.[1166] It accepted the idea that there was a presidentialisation of politics. However, it rejected the allied argument that newspapers sought to position themselves with 'seemingly non-ideological party leaders' as part of this presidentialisation.[1167]

Labour has taken on aspects of Otto Kirchheimer's 'catch-all' party, which is often associated with a political communications assessment of modern politics.[1168] The leadership has been strengthened and the party member's role downgraded, in contrast to Jennifer Lees-Marshment's assessment, discussed in Chapter 7.[1169] However, the emphasis of this work – that press policy has undergone a neo-liberal shift – is at odds with the notion that Labour has become programmatically indeterminate. There has been a determination to deregulate. In this sense, New Labour has gone along with another postulate of Kirchheimer. It has sided with the previously 'hostile interests' of the business community – in this case that of the media. Contrary to some assessments, this

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[1166] Margaret Scammell, 'New Media, New Politics', in Dunleavy, Patrick. 2002. *Developments in British politics 6*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002.: 169-184, 179, Colin Seymour-Ure, 'Are the Broadsheets Becoming Unhinged?' in Seaton, Jean. 1998. *Politics & the media : harlots and prerogatives at the turn of the millennium*. Oxford: The political quarterly.: 43-54.
[1167] Seymour-Ure, Editorial Opinion: 99.
[1168] Kirchheimer, Otto, 'The catch all party model', in Mair, Peter. 1990. *The West European party system*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.: 50-60, Scammell, Margaret. 1999. "Political Marketing: Lessons for Political Science." *Political Studies* 47:718-739.: 721.
[1169] Lees-Marshment: 698.

work has suggested that this is an ideological stance.[1170] It was argued that Thatcher's Conservatives operated as a preference-shaping party and Labour moved into the new political environment created; one not always reflected by the less rightist-inclined electorate. If anything, it has been as much a case of 'catch-up' as 'catch-all', when it comes to press ownership policy. Perhaps surprising sources have made a similar assessment. Political marketing theorists have noted that marketing was pioneered by some of the most ideologically-determined parties – Thatcher's Conservative Party in Britain and the Republicans under Reagan in the US. Some have borrowed from marketing to argue that parties like Labour have attempted to challenge these strong 'market leaders' by attempting to reduce 'product differences'.[1171] Nevertheless, although the attraction to media business of Labour's press ownership policy is clear, its attraction to the electorate as a whole is not so obvious. One isolated attempt to gauge public opinion on the Communications Bill, albeit by a vested interest, showed a majority opposed to American ownership of ITV.[1172]

In contrast to Seymour-Ure's interpretation, for instance, this work has argued that it was precisely because Blair's inclinations were only 'seemingly' non-ideological that his appeal was clear to some media corporations. They were attracted to his ideological support for the market, as we saw. To see Blair's pro-market drift as deideologising is to accept the Thatcherite revolution as the natural order, in the same way as it could have been argued in the post-war period that 'Butskellism' was non-ideological. Equally, to argue that the newspapers had become progressively less ideologically driven was to fly in the face of the experience of the virulent attack on Benn and the 'loony left' in the 1980s and then Kinnock in 1992.

[1170] Scammell, Margaret. 1999. 'Political Marketing: Lessons for Political Science'. *Political Studies* 47:718-739.: 721.

[1171] *Ibid.*: 730, citing Collins, N. 1996. "Positioning political parties: a market analysis." *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 1. She also later argued regarding parties like Labour that by neglecting members and activists, were rejecting one aspect of marketing theory. That is that an organisation needed, through its members, to maintain a relationship with its customers. (Scammell, Margaret. 2003. 'Citizen Consumers: towards a new marketing of politics?' in Corner, John and Dick Pels, *Media and restyling of politics*, London: Sage: 117-136: 122, 130-1).

[1172] The poll, carried out on behalf of the National Union of Journalists, showed that 52 per cent were against the Communications Bill leading to US ownership. The 'yes' vote was 23%, with 24% 'don't knows'. NUJ Press Release, 'Poll shows majority against American ownership of ITV', NUJ, February 11 2003.

The shift in the News Corporation's newspapers' support for Labour, in particular, has been considered by many other academics and commentators.[1173] This thesis has accepted, along with other writers, that there *has* been hostility mixed with the support of the *Sun*, as issues, especially the euro, have been placed into the mix.[1174] Yet, what the work has attempted to do is look at this relationship in a little detail. Appendix 1 of Chapter 7 suggested New Labour and News Corporation shared an attraction to market populism and that media ownership played a part. In government, Labour has adopted the liberal pluralist model for press ownership. It has continued to develop the understanding with press and media owners in order to gain maximum Labour representation.

All this means that the discussion about what is a representative press is key. There are no glib answers to gauging representation. This is a huge task for continued research. For instance, market democracy highlights the problems and the opportunities of going beyond representative democracy. This is a problem and a conundrum.

[1173] See for instance, McNair, *Journalism and democracy*: 149-50, Thomson, Stuart. 2000. *The social democratic dilemma : ideology, governance and globalization.* Basingstoke: Macmillan.: 147.
[1174] Margaret Scammell, 'New Media, New Politics', in Dunleavy, Patrick. 2002. *Developments in British politics 6.* Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002.: 169-184: 179.

LABOUR'S POLICY TRAJECTORY COMPARED

This work has taken a different view from a range of writers who analyse New Labour. From different perspectives, Steve Fielding, David Coates, and Paul Anderson and Nyta Mann identify the continuity between 'Old' and 'New' Labour.[1175] Fielding considers that New Labour is placing 'old values in a modern setting'.[1176] This is compatible with this work when it agrees with Panitch and Leys that Labour's New Left upsurge challenged Old Labour.[1177] In this sense, it considers that Kinnock's press policy was a move back to the more restricted intervention of Wilson and Callaghan.[1178]

However, this work indicated that New Labour has gone beyond this trajectory. Comparing Labour policy with a series of media models, the thesis suggested that the 1974-9 Labour administration's attraction to minimal anti-monopoly controls associated it with a particular liberal pluralist notion. Yet, this was replaced by the Blair government's insistence that those controls needed to be brought into line with general competition policy. This linked it with a significantly more unfettered liberal pluralist model. Although to date it has not gone as far as the complete withdrawal of all specific media regulations, it has signalled its intention to continue to chip away at the minimal press and cross-ownership regulations concerning newspapers. The policies converged with Conservative policies, away from traditional social democracy, as some authors have identified.[1179] In fact, in this particular policy area, Labour went even beyond Conservative catch-up, as Hay put it.[1180]

[1175] Coates, David. 1996. "Labour Governments: Old Constraints and New Parameters." *New Left Review*: 62-77., Anderson and Mann, Fielding, Steven. 2000. 'New Labour and the past' in *Labour's first century*, edited by Duncan Tanner, Pat Thane, and Nick Tiratsoo. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 367-392.

[1176] In his analysis, he emphasises social democracy's roots in new liberalism. (Fielding, New Labour).

[1177] Panitch and Leys.

[1178] Curran, for instance, identifies past senior Labour politicians as adopting a variant of a neo-liberal market approach when they refused intervention beyond the tightening of anti-monopoly legislation. (Curran, Different approaches: 94).

[1179] Hay, Colin. 1994. 'Thatcherite Revisionism: Playing the Politics of Catch-Up', *Political Studies* 42.: 700-7, Hay, Colin. 1999. *The political economy of new Labour : labouring under false pretences?* Manchester: Manchester University Press.. See also Heffernan, *New Labour and Thatcherism*, Panitch and Leys, Callaghan, *Retreat*, David Coates, 'New Labour's Industrial and Employment Policy' in Lawler and Coates: 122-135, Rorden Wilkinson, 'New Labour and the Global Economy' in Coates and Lawler: 136-

Thus, this work sees in this particular policy area a contrast with other more general assessments which emphasise the challenge New Labour made to the Thatcherite framework and which distinguish New Labour from the Conservatives in its commitment to state intervention.[1181] These authors' assessments may well be true for other aspects of government policy.[1182] Yet, that for press and cross-ownership has been defined by a particularly stark liberal pluralist agenda. The 'Thatcher effect' was to scupper notions of social responsibility and help strengthen the idea that newspapers were a business like any other. As Hugh Stephenson considers, this view contrasted with that of the Labour Party and even the Royal commissions on the press; that newspapers were key forums for democratic debate.[1183]

The thesis also indicated that the Kinnock years saw a significant change in press policy, which would go some way in backing those writers who argue that the general shift in Labour policy was greater under Kinnock.[1184] Equally, this work considered that there was some continuity between the latter part of the Smith reign and that of Blair in press and cross-ownership policy.[1185] We saw that Mowlam pushed Labour in a deregulatory direction months before Blair was installed as leader.

However, the work's evidence contradicts the notion that the shifts were greater under Kinnock than Blair. Employing the media models, the work saw that, as the Kinnock leadership started to dominate policy creation, there was a shift away from

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148, Denham, Andrew, and Mark Garnett. 2001. "From 'Guru' to 'Godfather': Keith Joseph, 'New' Labour and the British Conservative Tradition." *The Political Quarterly* 72: 97-106.

[1180] Hay, Catch-Up: 700-7.

[1181] Smith, Transition: 143-162, Andrew Gamble and David Kelly, 'Labour's New Economics' and Michael Kenny and Martin J. Smith, 'Interpreting New Labour: Constraints, Dilemmas and Political Agency' in Smith Martin, J., and Steve Ludlam. 2001. *New Labour in government*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2001.: 167-183, 234-255.

[1182] It appears that New Labour reacted against Thatcherism, for instance, in its commitment to communitarian politics and in its attitude to the constitution. (Driver and Martell. See also Denham, and Garnett: 97-106, Richards, David , and Martin J Smith. 2001. *New Labour, the Constitution and Reforming the State*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2001.). McGrew argues that the Third Way represented a defence of social democracy in a globalising economy. (McGrew, 'Globalisation': 151-4). However, as was indicated, the 'actually existing Third Way' has provided no such bulwark in press and cross-ownership policy.

[1183] Stephenson, Hugh, "Tickle the public: consumerism rules", in Bromley and Stephenson: 22.

[1184] Anderson and Mann, Wring, *Political marketing and the Labour Party*: esp. 15, 219.

[1185] Anderson and Mann.

interventionism. The liberal pluralist model was more clearly entrenched in the 1992 manifesto. Yet, it contained anti-monopoly pledges that went beyond the particular classical liberal status quo that Wilson and Callaghan did not challenge and the Blair government has gone beyond.

Also, we saw that what was merely in the mind of a shadow minister under Smith became a reality under Blair. Although this work questions the interpretation Scammell puts on the Blairite shift, it agrees that with regard to press ownership policy: "New Labour was not the 'safety first' option of Anderson and Mann's characterization".[1186] There was a shift from a liberal pluralist approach that emphasised the need for specific media anti-monopoly rules on cross-ownership, to one that wanted to reject these safeguards. There was a shift from the Kinnock period. The party only became associated with media oligopolisation, with all that implied for democratic debate, after Blair's election.

[1186] Scammell, Margaret. 1999. 'Political Marketing: Lessons for Political Science', *Political Studies* 47:718-739..

POLICYMAKING POWER AND SOME PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED IN THE THESIS

Dennis MacShane, writing long before becoming a New Labour minister, makes a number of perceptive points about the Labour governments' reluctance to grasp media reform. As MacShane indicates and as the work noted, the Labour *government* and leadership were unwilling to settle on a 'limited unifying programme' and treat media reform as a priority.

However, this work has shown that it is not true, as MacShane claims, that the *party* had "...no agreed policy on the media". It is not at all clear that to take one important figure: "If Labour had a media policy then Kaufman would promote it." Indeed, MacShane admits that the party provided policies on the press, but he downplays the party conference's prime sovereignty, the study groups' role and, especially, the 1983 manifesto commitment. A particular example of this is his claim that the party was reluctant to learn from abroad.[1187] As we have seen, many of Labour's plans were policy transfers. To pose legitimate questions about strategies, as MacShane does, is not the same as suggesting there was no policy.

Instead, the leadership and frontbench were reluctant to promote and implement the agreed policy. Some had an ideological objection – Kaufman, for instance, far from being a potential conduit of the radical policy, became a powerful pro-market advocate.

Nevertheless, one surprise for the author came when he expected to find evidence that would confirm Freedman's findings on the unions' influence, rejecting MacShane's view of their conservative role. The reality was more complicated. The union hierarchy, at least, acted as a conservative force on a number of occasions.

For instance, up until 1974, the NUJ rejected wholesale intervention. However, this stance collapsed. Like the TUC leaders' attachment to social democratic centralism, it was being assailed both internally and externally. Internally, it was starting to be

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[1187] MacShane, Media Policy in Seaton and Pimlott: 218, 219, 220, 224, 231.

challenged by calls for workers' participation. Externally, in the study group, it was not supported. The group instead looked to the more radical positions of Ascherson and the New Left Free Communications Group. This influenced *The people and the media* document and subsequent Labour Party policy. Thus, support for workforce participation in new newspaper initiatives was supported by the party conference as early as 1975.

After 1974, MacShane's characterisation of union conservatism was shown to have some validity. However, the unions and the TUC were pressing for interventionist policies far beyond that which the Labour government would countenance. They rejected the policy the party had belatedly developed; challenging MacShane's other assessment. Applying the 'classic' positions on policy formation to this tale of rejection challenges the pluralist view and accords with those of Minkin, the elitists and the Marxists. However, it appears that the Marxists' analysis explain the facts more fully. For reasons that were identified, an embattled Labour government was reluctant to openly challenge press businesses whose relative quiescence was needed by an administration fighting on other fronts. To emphasise the point concerning tensions; diversity and democratic control was sacrificed in order to enhance Labour representation.

Equally, MacShane is only partly correct if we consider the period after 1979. Although the circumstances surrounding the *Times* takeover shows his assessment has some validity, the reality of whole period was more complicated than his schema allows for. The combination of the upsurge of an activist-backed and *union-supported* radical policy taken after 1979, followed by the resurgence of right-wing influence, lends itself to the analysis of Minkin and the Marxist position, if the alternative reading outlined is accepted. Yet, it was the outside pressure of business that forced the right wing to shift the policy – particularly reflecting the Marxist analysis. Also, the centrality of the union movement in changing policy on press democratic control would appear to accord with the analysis of Minkin, McKenzie and the Marxists.

The continued centralising of power after 1983 also manifested itself with the operation of press policy. Although the process was not entirely linear, as we indicated, the

leadership strengthened its power and influence over press policy compared to that of the membership, the NEC and MPs. This and the unions' role in policy development accord better with the Marxists' analysis.

The work suggested that the new media strategy reinforced the pressure towards Labour leadership centralisation. Also, the perceived power of the press and media meant that those who were the party media strategists became more influential in general policy formation. As we saw, particularly in Appendix 1 to Chapter 6, the question of presentation became an integral influence on policies adopted. By the time of the 1992 election, the media strategists were playing a leading role in deciding general policy.

This points to a key problem this work encountered. It was difficult to ascertain entirely the direct influence that the media strategists have had on press ownership policy. This is partly because the actors involved have been reluctant to discuss such questions. After 1983, there seems to have been the appearance, at least, of a division of labour between those involved in press ownership policy and press presentation. Nevertheless, Corbett's insider account indicates that some of those seeming to formulate press policy had little sway by the time of the 1992 election. This area could certainly form the basis of further research.

Panitch and Leys argue that the Labour leadership had the support of outside forces including the press in defeating the Labour new left and the democratising activist surge in the 1980s and 1990s.[1188] This work's analysis shares this assessment regarding press policy. But it has indicated that the power rested more with newspaper business than the writers explicitly suggest, especially after 1994. The thesis considered that one factor which structured the particular way Labour decided to go with the grain of globalisation was in accommodating with some newspaper firms. Whether the power of the press businesses was as the Labour leadership perceived is less important than the actions the party hierarchy pursued.

[1188] Panitch and Leys: 264.

After 1994, the leadership's seeming internal mastery of policy formation would seem to accord with the idea that an elitist notion of policy creation was most apposite. The positions taken at past party conferences on diversity and democracy had been ignored. The members were primarily election fodder, merely consulted by their leaders. The formal position of the unions, as expressed at their congress, had been flouted. The leadership was dominant in its control of the NEC and among MPs. Equally, as we saw under Kinnock, the media strategy under Blair also strengthened leadership centralisation.

In addition, the House of Lords' role has to be taken into account, which, on balance, may accord most with an elitist analysis. On other issues, it was less compliant to the Labour government's wishes than the Commons. This was also the case with predatory pricing claims. The Labour Lords were more noticeable irritants, than their Commoner equivalents, in challenging the Labour administration's stance. With the draft Communications Bill, a Labour Lord was the vocal leader of a joint parliamentary committee that questioned significant parts of the Bill and later called for amendments. We can tentatively suggest some reasons for this. One is the role of patronage. Miliband wrote in the early 1970s that this hidebound MPs.[1189] However, once they became peers of the realm, they were more capable of independence; they were not reliant on leadership preferment and so determined to be 'on-message'. Equally, more Labour peers may well associate, on occasion, with 'Old Labour', through their adherence to ideas predating New Labour.

As for the MPs and the PLP under New Labour, they have tended to be subordinate, with some notable exceptions. They have overwhelmingly supported the leadership due to a mixture of ideological affinity, with candidates carefully selected through centralised election procedures, loyalty and the centralising pressure to be 'on-message'. This is not to ignore the important moments where MPs have challenged the new orthodoxy, as with

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[1189] Miliband, Ralph. 1972. *Parliamentary socialism : a study in the politics of labour*. London: Merlin Press.

support for the Media (Diversity) Bill in 1995. This assessment would seem to accord with a Marxist and also an elitist analysis.

However, while the elitist analysis provides a powerful explanation for a dominant leadership, it underplays the external pressures on party policy formation. A problem that has been pointed out in Marxist accounts of the sway of business on Labour policy is that capital in Britain has rarely "...achieved the necessary common consciousness, coherence and conspiratorial capacity to enforce its will upon the Labour Party...".[1190] Nevertheless, the leadership's anxiety to gain Labour representation and thus accommodate with the press companies, particularly News Corporation, was an external force structuring Labour in its overwhelming determination to go with the external pressure of globalisation. This seems to accord with a Marxist analysis. Again, whether the power of press business has been real or merely imputed was less important.

The unions' weakened role would seem to be explained best by a combination of the elitist and Marxist analyses. Although the unions' role in formal policy formation progressively lessened, they still had some power, particularly in the years before the introduction of the National Policy Forum. Yet, on the question of press cross-ownership, they chose not to use this. TUC motions were ignored. Pressure was not exerted through Labour Party structures. The union best placed to consider press ownership and which seemed most keen to push forward this issue within carefully prescribed limits, the NUJ, was not affiliated to the Labour Party. This hampered its effect.[1191] The Marxist analysis, where the unions' degree of support for the leadership is to an extent regulated by membership pressure can also to some degree explain this. In addition to the elitist notion of their being a 'bond of confidence' between the union leaders and the Labour leadership, it was further industrial retreat that had strengthened the hold of social democratic centralism once again within the union leadership. 'New Realism' and 'partnership' were now the buzz-words. In particular, the TUC had gone down the same

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[1190] See Randall, Nick. 2001. 'Explaining Labour's Ideological Trajectory', Interpretations of Labour History Conference, PSA Labour Movements Group, Manchester, July 6 2001: 14.
[1191] Interestingly, Jeremy Dear, the NUJ General Secretary, called for the NUJ to affiliate to the Labour Party. However, he faced very stiff opposition. (Gopsill interview).

path as Labour, emphasising its own media strategy rather than pressing for structural change in the newspaper industry. Conversely, the Marxist analysis could point to a small upsurge in industrial activity mirroring some resurgence of the trade union left.[1192]

Generally, the unions' role has neither been entirely that which Freedman suggested was the case in television policy or that argued by MacShane. One aspect of this is union members' reluctance to increase reader participation. This is indicative of a journalistic culture, of which the determination to maintain high journalistic standards is the positive expression. The downside is the relative disdain expressed towards readers' input. One researcher identified this when considering US journalists' attitude to their newspapers' letters' page and wider reader participation. As Karin Wahl-Jorgensen indicates, the reluctance to consider such participation may well be indicative of a wider phenomenon.[1193] Some previous Labour discussion did attempt to consider bringing participation into the mainstream. However, only some union activists were enthusiastic proponents of this.

Nevertheless, contra MacShane, this work showed that, while the unions certainly did not betray the same radicalism as *the New Left strata*, the unions, together with the constituencies, were generally more radical than the Labour leadership on press ownership *policy*.[1194]

[1192] This has led to a minimal challenge to social democratic centralism on issues perceived as more directly central to the union movement. The year Blair was elected in 1997 and 1999 saw some of the lowest figures for numbers of days lost in disputes. The figure for 2000 and 2001 was double that, although not at a high level. By July 2002, figures were already considerably higher than either of the previous years, with the figures for July itself more than double those for the whole of either 1997 and 1999. (Office for National Statistics, 'Labour Disputes 1994-2002', last updated September 9 2002, www.statistics.gov.uk) The Labour leadership was defeated on the Public Finance Initiative at the 2002 conference. A number of prominent unions have also showed marked reluctance to carry on funding the Labour Party as before.

[1193] Wahl-Jorgensen, Karin. 'The construction of the public in letters to the editor', *Journalism*, Vol. 3(2): 183-204.

[1194] As we have seen, the main journalists' union, the NUJ has played a particular role in this. After experiencing a radicalising wave, it developed a workerist emphasis on democratising the existing press and extending the number of owners, rather than diversifying it beyond the existing ownership structures. It is instructive that the NUJ union official Tim Gopsill, who has been a prominent leftwing media activist for many years, views that: "The demand for alternative media was never really a demand of media workers, it was people from outside who wanted different media...". (Gopsill interview).

In summing up, it is the case that no single simple classic theory of Labour policy formation can completely explain the power relations bearing on press ownership policy. However, of the theories on offer, the Marxist theory best approximates, if not particularly well. It may well be the case that not all aspects of general Labour Party policy can be explained by the Miliband analysis of leadership betrayal of the dormant radicalism of the party's rank and file. The New Left's radicalising impetus on press ownership policies questions simple theories of party embourgeoisment leading to a deradicalisation of Labour's politics.[1195] Miliband and Coates *do* chronicle a death foretold and their pessimistic conclusions betray, especially with Miliband, a less than healthy dose of instrumentalism. As Panitch and Leys indicate, Miliband's *Parliamentary Socialism* is scathing in its denunciation of the 'illusions' of the left in attempting to transform the party.[1196] (We thus have this curious situation that while Miliband's work counsels that there is little opportunity for left advance in the party, contemporaneously he is advising Benn on precisely how to make that progress).[1197] For these reasons the alternative reading of the Marxists we considered in the first appendix to Chapter 1 is the interpretation we have considered. Students of Popper considering the seeming flexibility of a Marxist analysis might argue that this indicates Marxism's invalidity.[1198] Yet, to emphasise, this work has indicated that this alternative reading provides an approximate explanation of the power relations involved.

This assessment challenges the popular view that, in effect, the voters decide Labour policy. Lees-Marshment argues that political parties are now designing politics to suit voters or, even more positively, "...parties are being more responsive to people, which is good for democracy". As we saw, she suggests that the difference between Labour pre-1987 and post-1987 was between a sales-oriented and market-oriented approach. Those parties that are sales-oriented sell their politics to the electorate after deciding what to

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[1195] See Randall, Nick. 2001. 'Explaining Labour's Ideological Trajectory', Interpretations of Labour History Conference, PSA Labour Movements Group, Manchester, July 6 2001: 10, 18, 19.
[1196] Panitch and Leys: 3.
[1197] See, for example, Benn, Tony, and Ruth Winstone. 1995. *The Benn diaries*. London: Hutchinson.: 577-8.
[1198] See, for instance, Popper Karl, R. 1963. *Conjectures and Refutations : Growth of Scientific Knowledge*: Routledge.

sell. Those that are market-oriented design their "...product to suit the electorate at large".[1199]

However, this work has argued that the relationship with voters is more complicated. It was suggested that Downesian-style notions can only be applied to New Labour if they are radically rethought along the lines Heffernan considered, where Thatcherism had radically remoulded the electoral ground. Moreover, the work argued that Labour after 1987 did not always simply follow what voters wanted. Lees-Marshment rather uncritically accepts Labour strategists' research on this at face value. We saw that the marketeers did not respond to people's choices in a form of modified participative democracy, but tried to chart their undeveloped feelings – what Blumler, Kavanagh and Nossiter describe as "...perceptions, moods, needs and desires..."[1200] This is an important distinction. As one practising professional put it: "Politicians do not ask the voters what they want; they only seek reactions to what they have already decided to do."[1201] Along with some political marketing literature, this work questions the idea that marketing interaction with voters shaped the issues and politicians simply reacted to this. Instead, there was 'prior strategic direction'.[1202] We saw that Labour strategists' prior direction was so extensive that this questions whether the research was infected.[1203]

[1199] Lees-Marshment: 698.

[1200] Jay G Blumler, Dennis Kavanagh and T.J. Nossiter, 'Modern Communications versus Traditional Politics in Britain: Unstable Marriage of Convenience', in Swanson David, L., and Paolo Mancini. 1996. *Politics, media and modern democracy : an international study of innovations in electoral campaigning and their consequences*. Westport, Conn. ; London: Praeger.: 49-72, 53.

[1201] Bruce, Brendan. 1992. *Images of power : how the image makers shape our leaders*. London: Kogan Page.: 81.

[1202] Jerry Palmer, 'Smoke and mirrors: is that the way it is? Themes in political marketing', *Media, Culture & Society*, Vol. 24: 345–363. 357.

[1203] Philip Gould's book indicated he was involved in a clear political project. Yet, rather than being open to independent scrutiny, that the focus group research required, it was striking that the interpretation accorded with Gould's views. Moreover, we saw that political choices influenced the findings presented. We saw that strategists rejected the uncomfortable evidence regarding Kinnock's unpopularity and hostility to the poll tax, for instance.

The work also questioned the idea that the market could operate as a democratic tool when considering the relationship of readers to newspapers. The market may be the potentially simplest way that readers can 'vote' with their pennies in order to buy a paper that, along with a bundle of other interests, including entertaining and informing them, best represents either their political positions or their desire to have those positions challenged. Reasons why the market is flawed include the barriers to market entry and the way the advertising market has historically operated, which we have explored. In this sense, it is an imperfect market, which requires intervention to create diversity.

There are other senses in which the market approach is flawed, however. Money may be a simple instrument to indicate intentions, but it is a blunt one. Readers cannot indicate which parts of the bundle or what aspects of the political line of a newspaper they approve of by handing over their coins to a newsagent.

Even more importantly, the readers are not the only 'voters' who can use their money to influence the already-flawed market. Advertisers, newspaper group shareholders and stockholding companies have overwhelmingly more money and power with which they can buy more 'votes'. As Frank argues in a similar context, 'one dollar, one vote' is not democracy but plutocracy.[1204] In Chapter 1, we suggested that the questions of democracy and diversity were interwoven. But to repeat, diversity of media outlets is not enough for equality over decision-making. Control by citizens is required. To press merely for Labour representation was to ignore what organisation was providing the representation. It was to call for representative democracy without any way of democratically controlling that representation. We have seen that the market cannot fairly provide that representation.

Stanley Harrison was being rather simplistic when he wrote in 1974 that a "...handful of ultra-wealthy men..." commanded the press. Nevertheless, it *is* true of the businesses,

[1204] Frank: 86-7, 97.

shareholders and advertisers that: "They submit themselves to no election, acknowledge no control or responsibility, and stand completely outside British democracy."[1205] Notwithstanding what was indicated in Chapter 1, this threat to democracy still existed in the 1990s, as Kevin Williams indicated, while the number of businesses involved was decreasing.[1206] This work indicates that New Labour's policies, if anything, have reinforced this threat.

The question then becomes: what can provide that control, in order to advance democracy? Clearly, the Labour Party's earlier discussions only provided flawed answers to this. A problem is one of how to create a situation where readers and citizens can participate and control. A difficulty is how to representatively gauge views and how this would translate into press representation. As we saw, the Labour left's concentration on representing 'producer interests', mirrored the problems with wider media models.

This work considered Labour's changing attitude to broader participation in the press and its effect on editorial freedom. Frank Allaun, for instance, seems to feel that Labour policies, if properly framed, would "...seek to give editors more, not less, freedom of operation".[1207] Well, up to a point, Lord Copper. Michael Gurevitch and Jay Blumler correctly identify that there is a tension between editorial autonomy and the ideal of offering individuals and groups access to the media. However, contrary to this thesis' emphasis, they also suggest that one of the requirements for democracy of the mass media is that it maintains a 'principled resistance' to efforts from those outside the media to subvert its independence.[1208]

This work has rejected government control, but indicated that democracy also involves the participation and involvement of the wider citizenry in the mass media. While interference of the proprietor could be banished and day-to-day decisions would be up to the editor, there would be some interference in the editor's freedom under the Labour

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[1205] Harrison, Stanley. 1974. *Poor men's guardians : a record of the struggles for a democratic newspaper press, 1763-1973*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.: 221.
[1206] Williams, *Get me a murder a day*: 225.
[1207] Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 97.
[1208] Gurevitch and Blumler, *Democratic Values*: 270, 271.

left's most participative notions. This cannot be hidden. That is the meaning of the editor being accountable. It would be impractical and idealistic to insist that an editor's hands should be tied on minute-by-minute decisions on a national daily newspaper. Yet, substituting the power of a chief executive with that of an editor is still autocracy. Input by democratically-elected employee and reader representatives would, perhaps, have to come on a weekly or monthly basis. This work does not seek to prescribe on this. However, to widen participative democracy, it would seem that decision-making over what is in each newspaper cannot be the preserve of one person be they an owner or even editor, or indeed one private company.

Nor, however, does top-down state control, however seemingly benign, offer an alternative. Yet, this is not to dismiss the importance of carefully-circumscribed government intervention, especially when used to increase diversity. It would be easy to conclude from the discussion on spin and attempts at government interference in reporting that the last thing that would be required is increased government intervention in the press. It could be easily concluded that if there was intervention, it would be bound to lead to a more quiescent press. However, as we saw, strengthening the argument made by Els De Bens and Helge Østbye, the case of Norway shows that that government intervention need not lead to negative interference in the press. One of the Norwegian government's most insistent critics, the Marxist daily *Klassekampen* has only existed because of the subsidy system.[1209] This sort of limited government intervention works there. Why not in Britain?

[1209] Els De Bens and Helge Østbye, 'The European Newspaper Market' in McQuail, Denis, Karen Siune, and Group Euromedia Research. 1998. *Media policy : convergence, concentration and commerce.* Thousand Oaks, Calif. ; London: Sage Publications.: 7-22, 14.

THE FUTURE?

What of the future? Appendix 1 to the last chapter indicated that Labour's representation strategy has become distinctly frayed at the edges. Pippa Norris casts doubt on the claims of Nicholas Jones and Franklin that spin has undermined politician's credibility. She particularly notes that Franklin's work is not based on evidence of public opinion.[1210] However, this work has noted polling research that challenged this assessment. Pollsters indicated that the public were concerned about spin in the period up to 2002. The newspapers increased coverage of this phenomenon. This was an indication that the majority of newspaper businesses may not always be so supportive of a Labour government. By the end of 2002, the question of the entry into the euro and News Corporation's hostility also loomed on the horizon.

One Blairite MP, with a history of media campaigning, has expressed his fear to the author that press support for Labour may be temporary.[1211] For the News Corp press, the turn that the *Sun* made against Labour in the 1970s was one indication of this shift. Another was the experience of the Australian Labor Party. As we saw, the *Telegraph* and *Mail* titles' coverage had become more hostile by the end of 2002. The problem had not necessarily been solved. Labour could be again faced with an overwhelmingly hostile press. Martin Linton's prediction in this situation might be reductionist regarding ownership and control, but has a ring of truth. He told the author: "... when it does happen you will still be left with this irreducible problem that you have a press which is owned by four or five people...and they want to push their right-wing agendas in their publications, so far as their readers will put up with them".[1212] Crystal ball gazing is a

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[1210] Pippa Norris, 'Political Communications in Post-Industrial Democracies', in Dowding Keith, M., James Hughes, Helen Margetts, and Association Political Studies. 2001. *Challenges to democracy : ideas, involvement, and institutions, the PSA yearbook 2000*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave : in association with Political Studies Association.: 100-117, 103, Jones, Nicholas. 1995. *Soundbites and spin doctors : how politicians manipulate the media - and vice versa*. London: Cassell, 1995. Jones, *Sultans*, Jones, *Control freaks* and Franklin, *Packaging politics*.

[1211] As we saw, Paul Foot put a similar view. (Foot, Paul.1996. 'Sour note, Moonie tune', *The Guardian*, April 15 1996).

[1212] Linton interview. NUJ official Tim Gopsill views that: "In the modern Labour Party ... there is still a huge residual loathing and hatred of Murdoch... People's memories are not that short, people running the Labour Party now remember the 80s ...You can't abandon your whole history and all your experience, and

risky business for anyone, let alone someone attempting historical interpretation. Yet, in the circumstance Linton describes, there may be a pressure in the party to revisit the discarded policies on press ownership. The question would then be whether the liberalisation of media policy had made it much more difficult to put the genie back into the bottle.

Unquestionably, the hold of the Labour leadership over policy formation is stronger than it was 30 years ago. Changes in the structure of the party have strengthened the leadership's hold. However, the Labour hierarchy's weakness then was a product of the breakdown of social democratic centralism, where the trade union leadership had provided its buttress. The Kinnock era saw a reinvigoration of social democratic centralism, as Wring identifies, following Shaw's notion.[1213] If the decline in the union's role in the Labour Party continues, it may make this centralism a more uncertain business.[1214] The distancing of the trade union hierarchy may also lead to it taking a less politically subordinated role, as it started to do, which may also have destabilising effects for the Labour elite. Whether this will have any impact on Labour's press and cross-ownership policy is more debatable, however. As indicated, while the non-affiliated NUJ developed in a radical direction, this was in reaction to an effective employer onslaught, rather than due to its strength. The press unions' ability to wield Labour policy-making power is low. Also, press ownership policy does not have the priority it once had for the trade union movement and party membership, for reasons we considered. Although, in Linton's scenario, this could change.

The diversity of alternative publications is now on the Internet, where there are opportunities for broader participation. The advent of digitalisation has unleashed the potential for huge swathes of media content to be disseminated.[1215] Newsprint scarcity is not a barrier. As such, there has been much investment by publishers in Net-based

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you know that you have to do deals here and there, but ... the majority of the Labour Party are not going to be able to throw over their historical antipathy to right wing media owners." (Gopsill interview).

[1213] Wring, *Political marketing and the Labour Party*: 166.

[1214] As Callaghan puts it "...coalition-building within the party may become a more uncertain business for the parliamentary leaderships". (Callaghan, *Retreat*: 199-200).

[1215] Doyle, *Understanding*: 143.

projects. The potential income from the Net comes from such classified advertising, as well as display advertising, e-commerce links to items mentioned in articles and fees for subscription on-line versions of newspapers.[1216]

One question for further research is to consider whether it is likely to encounter the same problems with the costs of advertising and promotion that the newspapers have faced. Another concerns the opportunities for reader involvement in newspapers, which have increased with Internet access.[1217]

However, the initial enthusiasm for the Internet in providing a qualitatively different democratic media tool has withered for some.[1218] There has been a development of monopolisation, as Mansell and Doyle make clear.[1219] Involvement has not taken the role of active participation in the decisions regarding newspapers in the sense discussed throughout this study. Nonetheless, there have been excellent examples of increased diversity provided by the web, however on a comparatively small scale.[1220] However, this is not necessarily entirely positive. Blumler and Gurevitch have conjured a spectre of a

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[1216] Doyle, *Media ownership*: 141-54.

[1217] There have been discussion groups, prompted by newspapers, which have extended debate among readers on key issues identified by the titles themselves. In addition, newspapers have hosted on-line discussions with prominent individuals. Nevertheless, it appears that, for the most part, these initiatives have mostly operated effectively as an extended letters page. Bromley argues that the opportunity of cyberspace is that its openness means that it has the possibility of bringing press accountability. It is certainly the case that the difference between email and the letters page is that the newspaper exercises more direct editorial control with material on the letters page. (Michael Bromley, 'Watching the watchdogs'? The role of the readers' letters in calling the press to account', in Bromley and Stephenson: 147-162).

[1218] So one Internet enthusiast complained that it was changing "...from being a participatory medium that serves the interests of the public to being a broadcast medium where corporations deliver consumer-oriented information". (McChesney, *Corporate media*: 34).

[1219] This has particularly been the case with web-based portals and where for instance, existing media giants' access to content makes them able to benefit enormously. (Mansell, Robin. 1999. "New media competition and access : the scarcity-abundance dialectic." *New Media and Society* 1:155-182.: esp. 163). The Internet been the catalyst for a number of huge mergers, successful or otherwise. (Doyle, *Media ownership*: 178). One cyberbase and community action theorist has expressed fears that, without a battle for democratic communication: "... the few (mostly governments and large corporations) will act as gatekeepers for the many, where the elites can speak and the rest can only listen." (Schuler, Douglas. 2003. 'Reports of the close relationship between democracy and the Internet may have been exagerated', in Jenkins, Henry and David Thorburn (eds.), *Democracy and new media*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press: 69-84: 69.

[1220] An excellent example of the pluralistic potential of the Internet for providing diverse news, is, perhaps ironically, associated with one of the most prominent critics of the liberal pluralist view of the media, James Curran. The site is opendemocracy.net. This indicates a divergence across the Net.

division between a section of coherent communication and one dominated by a cacophony of voices with nothing to "...put all this together 'at the centre'."[1221] In other words, the Internet's libertarian possibilities could leave us with sections of the Net colonised by the large media enterprises and another without any means to democratically determine which voices are prioritised. The discussion in this work may, in a modest sense, shed some light on the problems and opportunities of any steps along this road.

Finally, in summing up media policy, Seymour-Ure argues that no-one put the case successfully "...that the need to hold an increasingly integrated media industry accountable to the public through the government was greater than the need to hold the government accountable through the media".[1222] However, what this work indicates is that, in the period we are considering, no-one successfully argued for a Labour government to enact forms of press accountability that went beyond this statist social democratic conception to one where other forms of democratic accountability were considered. In failing to do so, legislation did not go beyond considering the state and the market as an either/or, as does Seymour-Ure. Before this question was excluded from debate, at least with regard to the press, and citizens were reduced to consumers as we saw, Labour at least considered this crucial problem for the democratic functioning of society.

The case for democratic control over the mainstream media subsequently lessened. This work indicates some reasons why pressure for greater participation has been derailed. In this sense, it can be situated within a literature that is concerned with this phenomenon both in this Britain and abroad. There were problems, or at least areas of contention, with all the models for democratic ownership put forward by those involved in debates in the Labour Party. There is the possibility that journalists and/or interest groups may be given too much power under such systems. Further research will be needed to assess all the

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[1221] Blumler Jay, G., and Michael Gurevitch. 1995. *The crisis of public communication.* London: Routledge.: 168-9. However, perhaps the extensive role that the BBC has carved for itself on the Internet could provide one small challenge to this.
[1222] Seymour-Ure, *British press and broadcasting*: 273.

problems of these flawed models in this partly hidden history when deliberating over this important area for the advance of democracy.

Nevertheless, the problems with the alternatives do not mean that they should be dismissed out of hand. They would have been more broadly democratic than a system where a few conglomerates dominate. There are examples where, in the slow process of policy implementation, problems have been ironed out. Curran gives the example of the Scandinavian press schemes where this is the case, when it comes to press diversity legislation.[1223] Hall, Land, Parker and Webb identify examples in other areas in British policymaking, also.[1224]

With policies for democratic control, it is only through implementation that the power of groups such as journalists and/or pressure groups could have been assessed and adjusted if this was commonly wished. Thus, such difficulties provide a reason why there were disagreements in the Labour Party over implementing a democratic model that went beyond liberal pluralism. However, the problems were not a justification on their own for why no such system was implemented. In considering the shifting policies and power of policymakers within the Labour Party, involving both diversity and democracy, this work has attempted to outline some of the reasons why this was the case.

[1223] Curran interview.
[1224] Hall, Phoebe. 1975. *Change, choice and conflict in social policy*. London: Heinemann Educational.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 to Chapter 1: Approaches to Labour Party Policy Formation

Chapter 1 introduced the notion of there being 'classic theories' of Labour Party policy formation. This appendix will survey these theories so that the rest of the thesis can relate them to the changing distribution of power involving press ownership policy creation.

The Views of Beer and Minkin on Policy Creation

Samuel Beer typifies one view of Labour Party policy formation. He sees Labour as having operated as a pluralist democracy, at least in its early days. Its early structure gave influential weight to extra-parliamentary organisation, with the conference, representing union interests, providing a powerful influence on the parliamentary party. Nevertheless, the MPs had some leeway in voting on policy positions and loyalty to the leader was not overwhelming. The interwar years saw the party adopt a socialist ideology that was shared by the leadership and rank and file. Although, in common with the British parliamentary system, an elite developed, the limits imposed on it were clearly delineated by party consensus. This elite had to make substantial concessions to the party followers in the 1950s. Latterly, although, he considers that influence had become more concentrated in this elite's hands. His emphasis is towards there being a plural diversity of power within the party. Power is shared between different elements in an intra-party democracy.[1225] In viewing the party in this way, Beer implicitly rejects the views of Robert McKenzie and Robert Michels, Ralph Miliband and David Coates, who we shall consider in turn.[1226] In his pluralist account, Beer particularly sees the role of the activists and the MPs as having considerable weight.[1227]

[1225] Beer Samuel, H. 1982. *Modern British politics : parties and pressure groups in the collectivist age.* London: Faber and Faber.: 108-152, 228-242, 406.
[1226] McKenzie, R.T. 1958. *British political parties: the distribution of power within the Conservative and Labour parties.* London: Heinemann., Michels, R. 1959. *Political parties : a sociological study of the*

In his survey of intra-party democracy from 1956 to 1979, Lewis Minkin also suggests there was a certain plurality in policy formation. A number of sources were involved. There was the influence of the unions, the National Executive Committee (NEC) and the Labour Party conference, as the party's sovereign body. There was also differentiation within Labour governments themselves. This contributed to some diversity in policy formation. However, Minkin does not entirely share the pluralist analysis. Instead, he considers that there is no simple categorisation of power distribution. He, alternatively, detects some elements of elitism between the leadership and the party members, in which the leadership was predominant in creating policy. However, he also sees the influence of the unions prescribing the boundaries in the leadership's room for manoeuvre.[1228]

The Conception of Policy Development of McKenzie and Michels

The elitist approach to Labour Party policy formation is exemplified by Robert McKenzie, writing in the 1950s, and is backed up by the earlier analysis of Robert Michels. McKenzie views the Labour Party's members as primarily election fodder, merely consulted by their leaders. He suggests that, for the most part, decision-making has been in the hands of the parliamentary leadership. By taking this view, McKenzie implicitly refutes Beer's assessment. He also goes further than Minkin in stressing leadership power. By defending this state of affairs, McKenzie also implicitly rejects the analysis of Miliband and Coates who do not accept his normative implications.[1229]

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oligarchical tendencies of modern democracy. New York ; London: Dover Publications : Constable [distributor]., Miliband, R. 1969. *The state in capitalist society*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson., Miliband, R. 1972. *Parliamentary socialism : a study in the politics of labour*. London: Merlin Press., Miliband, R. 1984. *Capitalist democracy in Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press., Coates, D. 1980. *Labour in power? : a study of the Labour Government, 1974-1979*. London ; New York: Longman.

[1227] It is true, nevertheless, that in the later period he begins to agree with McKenzie and Michels on the leadership's power. He particularly concurs with Michels in considering the source of its managerialism to be the specialist skills it needed to develop. (Beer: 406).

[1228] Minkin, L. 1980. *The Labour Party conference: a study in the politics on intra-party democracy*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.: 317.

[1229] For an explicit rejection of McKenzie's view that parliamentarianism *should* take precedence over intra-party democracy see Miliband, R. 1958. 'Party Democracy and Parliamentary Government'. *Political Studies* 6.

McKenzie suggests that this leadership power has been a product of the parliamentary system, where MPs' prime responsibility has been to their electorate, not their party membership. For parliamentarians to have taken a lead from elsewhere would be unconstitutional. Parliamentary government would be unworkable. The extra-parliamentary party had become just an organised pressure group with some privileged access. Leaders had to listen and take into account the views of the rank and file – and in opposition the leadership was more eager to take heed. But they did not become the servants of the party outside Parliament. He rejects the view that MPs were entirely subject to annual conference direction.[1230]

McKenzie indicates that the leadership had its hands on the tiller of policy creation. In the time he was surveying, he sees there to have been a social democratic centralism, with the link between the unions and the party as central in the extra-parliamentary party. He views that the leadership relied on the block vote moderation of the unions to derail any radical impetus from the membership at Labour's conference. A narrow band of union leaders, who wielded major influence over union delegation decisions, shared a 'bond of confidence' with the party leadership.[1231]

Conferences were also marked with a deference where delegates accorded Labour in government an "...awe and pride..." and ministers dominated conference discussion. The effect of this was that, while the conference had, on occasion, played an important role in party affairs and party programme, for the most part this had been with the leadership's approval. It had normally acted as a barometer of party opinion, influencing the NEC and the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP).[1232] Indeed, McKenzie sees that constituency parties "...had little influence in the formulation of the goals and programme of the Labour Party, even less on the policies of the PLP, and only a faint influence on the

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[1230] McKenzie: 485-6, 488, 558, 583, 585, 587-8. See also 452-3.
[1231] *Ibid.*: 423-56, 486, 490, 492-3, 506, 586.
[1232] *Ibid.*: 496-9, 506-7, 508-11. McKenzie emphasises that the members of Labour Party, the vast majority of whom had been affiliated through the unions, gave their consent to this arrangement. To change this, would require the unions adopting procedures that were more democratic and gave constituency delegates more influence. This, for McKenzie would invalidate the conference as an authoritative body. (*Ibid.*: 506-7).

activities of a Labour Government".[1233] In a conflation of the normative and the explanatory, McKenzie regards the exclusion of membership control over policy formation as proper in a parliamentary regime.

The PLP is seen to be dominated by the leadership. In Government, the operation of the Cabinet system made it a task of the PLP to minimise opposition to Government policy among MPs. There were rare indications that the leadership in Government sought approval for proposals before bringing them before parliament. When such an issue was discussed, however, the Government could normally rely on patronage and loyalty to secure support. Out of office, the leader had a "...degree of authority that is nowhere acknowledged in the constitution of the party". The Parliamentary Committee or Shadow Cabinet tended to dominate policy creation. [1234]

As for the role of the NEC in policy formation, although formally responsible to conference and with an in-built union majority, McKenzie's analysis is that it has been almost always led by the parliamentary leadership. This was by virtue of the fact that the majority of the NEC's members had often been leaders of the PLP. This state of affairs was again maintained by the consent of the unions, for the reasons already discussed.[1235]

Michels' View

McKenzie's approach is linked to other elitists, such as Robert Michels. Though he was writing of social democracy, and especially the German party before the First World War, this work will consider the work of Michels, in order to provide a theoretical backdrop. Michels also emphasises that there was a lack of intra-party democracy. He provides an explanation as to why parties have been controlled by their leaders. His view is that an 'iron law of oligarchy' governs parties. The development of an organisation leads to technical specialisation and a concentration of expertise among the leadership.

[1233] *Ibid.*: 557.
[1234] *Ibid.*: 299-309, 416-7, 445, 447, 527.
[1235] An additional factor in PLP supremacy was that, because TUC General Council members had been debarred from the NEC, the union representatives on the executive were mostly second-rank. (*Ibid.*: 424, 519-32).

Those involved gain knowledge in areas that others cannot access. They justify their dominance by their exclusive expertise. As the organisation expands, so does leadership power.[1236] Leaders can often disregard the positions of the party with impunity, since they are seen as indispensable. Dismissing such figures would discredit the party. Members are either happy to leave party affairs to the leadership, because they variously need guidance or look up to their 'hero' leaders or are too tired to attend party meetings.[1237]

McKenzie rejected Michels' 'iron law' as too rigid. He emphasised that the law did not recognise there was a space for revolts to undermine leaders and that the leadership had to listen to the rank-and-file.[1238] Nevertheless, Michels' view backs up McKenzie's position by providing reasoning for *why* leaders control parties, such as the Labour Party. There are seen to be organisational, practical and psychological reasons behind the leadership's dominance in policy development.

The Analysis of Miliband and Coates

Finally, we will look at the work of Miliband and Coates. They view policy development in the Labour Party as conditioned by the operation of capitalism. The Marxists share some assumptions with the elitists. Miliband and Coates view that the parliamentary leadership has had more power to create policy than other parts of the Labour Party.[1239] Like McKenzie, Miliband also emphasises that a determining factor in this has been that the leadership and, for the most part, the unions and its Labour left opposition, have accepted the parliamentary system's dominance. But he sees this as negatively stifling radical policies and working class advancement.[1240] Nevertheless, unlike the elitists, the Marxists consider that the leadership's power over policy creation has not always been absolute.

[1236] Michels, R. 1959. *Political parties : a sociological study of the oligarchical tendencies of modern democracy*. New York ; London: Dover Publications : Constable [distributor].: 31-2, 33, 82-5, 151-2, 401.
[1237] *Ibid.*: 52, 53, 56, 57, 63-8, 85-6.
[1238] McKenzie: 587.
[1239] See, for instance, Miliband, *Capitalist democracy*: 69-71.
[1240] Miliband, *Parliamentary socialism*: 13, Miliband, R. 1969. *The state in capitalist society*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.: 148-9.

One factor in this has been the unions. Like McKenzie and Minkin, both Miliband and Coates see a key role for the unions in policy formation.[1241] Contrary to McKenzie, Miliband emphasises that this points to a key explanatory factor: The Labour Party is a class-based party founded on the unions, but the leadership "...have always sought to escape from the implications..." of this.[1242] Despite this influence, both Marxists see the unions' role has been self-limited by their leaders' Labourist viewpoint, restricting involvement to the industrial and associating the political with the parliamentary.[1243] In a version of 'social democratic centrism', for the most part, Coates indicates, the majority of union leaders have buttressed the PLP's policy-forming autonomy and have preferred to negotiate directly with the Labour leadership.[1244]

However, the Marxists emphasise, unlike McKenzie, that this state of affairs has not been axiomatic. At various times, after 1959, between 1970 and 1974 and in the late 1970s, the unions either withdrew their support or took a more active role in policy formation. Reasons for this included rank and file pressure and the election of more radical union leaders, due to resentment at Labour government policies. [1245] Although these shifts did not always presage a left-wing turn in Labour policies, it was more regularly associated with this and the role of the unions was a key determinant. [1246]

Miliband also sees that the leadership, for most of the time, maintained control by its hold over the NEC and the PLP. However, again this is not seen as axiomatic. Coates considers this as having shifted by the early 1970s, where the determinants of Labour policy included the political commitments and coalitions formed by the individuals in the

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[1241] For instance, Miliband cites Labour minister Richard Crossman, in his introduction to Walter Bagehot's *The English Constitution*, that party sovereignty was partly undermined by the operation of the block vote. (Miliband, *Capitalist democracy*: 69, Crossman, R.H.S. 'Introduction' in Crossman, R.H.S. and Bagehot, W. 1963. *The English constitution*. Glasgow: Fontana/Collins.: 41).

[1242] Miliband, *Parliamentary socialism*: 348.

[1243] *Ibid.*: 374, Coates, *Labour in power?*: 202-226.

[1244] Coates, *Labour in power?*: 54.

[1245] Miliband, *Parliamentary socialism*: 346-7, 350, Coates, *Labour in power?*: 2-7, 56, 57-85.

[1246] An exception to this trend, for Miliband, was after 1959. (Miliband, *Parliamentary socialism*: 346-7, 350, Miliband, *Capitalist democracy*: 69, 71-3 and Coates, *Labour in power?*: 2-7, 56, 57-85).

Cabinet.[1247] Miliband also considers that the NEC lessened its support for the leadership in the late 1970s. The defeat of the Labour government weakened the power of those at the top still further. Miliband cites the success of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy over reselection as evidence of this.[1248]

Leadership domination of the activists and the Labour Left – seen as linked – is another feature of the two Marxists' accounts. The Left is seen as torn between loyalty and opposition. The Marxists' emphasis is on its acquiescence.[1249] For the most part, they implicitly accept the view against Beer that the membership's role in policy formation has been markedly limited. Nevertheless, Miliband also indicates that the Labour left has played a role in providing countervailing policies to the leadership. [1250]

Miliband sees this same tension operating among MPs. However, the pressures from the leadership, moderating policy creation by the PLP, are considered greater. Claims to party loyalty, the extensive tentacles of patronage, the co-option of rebels, severe disciplinary measures and the support for parliamentarianism have all succeeded in reducing the number of consistent left-wing parliamentarians achieving high office.[1251]

Miliband and Coates, however, also look beyond the Labour Party to consider the pressures on policy construction, especially when in government. A key difference between the Marxists and Beer, McKenzie and Michels is how they see the influence of factors outside the Labour Party operating to restrict policy formation, including by the leadership.

Miliband, for instance, sees democracy under capitalism as strongly limited by the operation of business within the economy, which is in turn restrained by universal

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[1247] Coates, *Labour in power?*: 149-50.
[1248] Miliband, *Capitalist democracy*: 71-3.
[1249] Miliband, *Parliamentary socialism*: 14-5, 374-5, Coates, *Labour in power?*: 276.
[1250] Miliband, *Capitalist democracy*: 68-9, 158.
[1251] *Ibid.*: 41-6.

suffrage, meaning that those who sell their labour power also need to be placated.[1252] From this, in one of his earlier works, he sees his own 'iron law of oligarchy' operating with "...no exception...", leaving him open to charges of determinism. He argues that social democratic parties, such as Labour, have often been elected based on a significantly radical upsurge in popular consciousness, with openness to policy change. However, their leaders have wanted to assure business, dampen down expectations and have always been more moderate in the policies put forward than their supporters.[1253] Civil servants provide another outside constraint for Miliband on Labour policy formation in government, as well as implementation.[1254]

Further than this, Coates makes a more general point, considering the period of the 1974 Labour Government. He goes beyond Miliband's view, which tends to focus on the class-based power of elites, especially business, as a major limit on policy formation. Pointing to an area that we will consider regarding Labour policies on press regulation, Coates argues that Labour was incapable of understanding and dealing with the operation and the pressure of international capitalism. He refutes the allegation that this analysis is economically determinist. Other factors are significant, but there are definite limits to their influence – proscribed by the laws of capitalist accumulation.[1255] Thus, for Miliband, a law of oligarchy and, for Coates, the laws of accumulation *affect* the path of policy development, at least when Labour is in government, in what some see as a 'chronicle of a death foretold'. [1256]

[1252] Miliband, R. 1969. *The state in capitalist society*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.: 139-49, Miliband, *Capitalist democracy*: 97-9.

[1253] Miliband, R. 1969. *The state in capitalist society*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.: 89-91. While, on occasion, Miliband considered that the leaders might put forward policies opposing the ruling classes, they were mainly marked by timidity and, at their most bold, did not threaten the existing social order. Thus, he suggests: "Politics, in this context, is indeed the art of the possible. But what is possible is above all determined by what the 'business community' finds acceptable." (Miliband, R. 1969. *The state in capitalist society*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.: 92-3, 97-9, 99-100, 106).

[1254] As non-governmental elements of the state, they "... are generally less vulnerable to popular pressures, or not vulnerable to them at all [and] are therefore able to act as bulwarks of continuity, stability, 'sound' and 'reasonable' policies...", providing a limit on government and preserving conservative continuity. (Miliband, R. 1969. *The state in capitalist society*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.: 137).

[1255] Coates, *Labour in power?*

[1256] Bale, T. 1999. *Sacred cows and common sense : the symbolic statecraft and political culture of the British Labour Party*. Aldershot ; Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate.: 1.

An alternative?

However, the glimmer of an alternative reading of the Marxists is also possible, which this work will explore. Whether immutable laws govern policy creation, as opposed to implementation, is not so clearly identified in the Marxists' work. Minkin and McKenzie identify with the Marxists that the trade unions are a source of power. The unions were seen to be able to shift the balance of forces in developing policy, and open up an increased role for the activists and left MPs, through forums such as the conference and the NEC. Indicating the tensions between human agency and determinist laws within Marxism itself, Miliband at points glimpses at a role for pressures from below. The main one of these is seen as being the working class, firstly in the form of the unions, which have challenged what the Marxists saw as the conservative orthodoxy in policy formation.[1257]

Another factor can be indicated here. Minkin notes that, in the early period this thesis is considering, there was a developing institutional independence and differentiation of policy between the Labour Party and the Labour government. So, although the party had a limited effect on Government policy formation, the Labour government had decreasing influence on party policy output. This stalemate was sustained by the formal patterns of intra-party democracy and conference authority over the NEC, the change in political alignment evidenced at conference and the role performed by the NEC.[1258] Thus, there is the possibility for the party to engage in independent policy formation, less directly constricted by the factors Miliband and Coates invoke.

[1257] See for instance Miliband, *Parliamentary socialism*: 347, Miliband, *Capitalist democracy*: 149-150.
[1258] Minkin, L. 1980. *The Labour Party conference: a study in the politics on intra-party democracy.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.: 317.

Appendix 2 to Chapter 1: Prelude – Labour representation after the war

We shall start by considering policy following the Second World War. Starting here, it is important to appreciate three considerations. Firstly, the period before the war was also one where governments of all political hues generally did not have a policy or any special laws regarding the press. Any such policy was equated with political control. Yet, wartime measures had changed that. There was government economic control of the press.[1259]

Secondly, many committed to Labour representation in the 1970s and early 1980s wanted to create a mass market paper directly funded and controlled by the Labour movement. Yet, the era when this had last been the case had long since past by the end of the Second World War. British parties by then, unlike in other parts of Europe, neither controlled nor sustained British newspapers.[1260] One could view the *Daily Herald* as the last example of this sort of direct Labour movement representation until its demise in the 1960s. But as Huw Richards makes plain, even it had stopped being an official Labour movement organ in 1929 when financial reasons forced the TUC to seek external commercial funding.[1261]

Thirdly, the period after 1945 also saw the Labour leadership turn to mass media campaigning, which would lead to a particular interest in Labour representation in the press.[1262] We will consider this further in later chapters. However, what is important to note at this stage is that the concern for Labour representation figured in the calculations of the Labour leadership. This provided an early indication that Labour representation might not be a steady ally of diversity.

After 1945, diversity considerations were reflected in demands that arose in the Labour Party for an inquiry into the press, following demands from the National Union of

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[1259] Seaton, J., 'Government policy and the mass media' in Curran, *The British Press*: 300-1, Tunstall, J. 1995. *Newspaper power : the new national press in Britain.* Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press.: 380.
[1260] Koss, S. 1984. *The rise and fall of the political press in Britain.* London: Hamilton.: esp. 678.
[1261] Richards, *The bloody circus*: Chapter 6.
[1262] See Wring, *Political marketing and organisational development*: 1-12.

Journalists.[1263] There were concerns about press concentration, which led to a Commons motion calling for what became the first Royal Commission on the Press.[1264] But, even at this early stage, one of the two Labour MPs calling for the enquiry, future leader Michael Foot, highlighted concerns about political bias against Labour in the provincial newspaper monopoly chains as a reason for action.[1265] As it was, there was a tension between the interventionist demands made in the party and the Attlee government's acceptance of the commission's minimalist view of regulation, with press owner support.[1266] O'Malley indicates that Labour ministers designed the commission to take a middle course between press owner interests and demands for reform.[1267] It dismissed fears about monopolisation and rejected legislation as dangerous.[1268] Labour ministers took this advice.[1269] The only substantial outcome was the delayed establishment of the self-regulatory Press Council to deal with complaints about newspapers.[1270]

Again, the combined concerns for Labour representation and press diversity surfaced in the Labour Party in 1961. Fears were raised that the buy-out of the *Daily Herald* by the owners of the *Daily Mirror* would mean the end of this consistently Labour-supporting title. However, the aspirant owners effectively courted Labour and union leaders, diffusing these concerns. Party support for a group that already owned a Labour-supporting daily and Sunday newspaper was perhaps unsurprising.[1271] However, Labour's original worries were realised only three years later when the new owners

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[1263] Berry, W.E. 1947. *British newspapers and their controllers*. London: Cassell.: 1, Koss, S. 1984. *The rise and fall of the political press in Britain*. London: Hamilton.: 638, Cole, H., 1952, *Socialism and the press*. London: Fabian Publications.: 18.

[1264] Berry: 2, Levy, H.P. 1967. *The Press Council : history, procedure and cases*. London: Macmillan.: 3-4, O'Malley T., 'Demanding Accountability: The Press, the Royal Commissions and the pressure for reform, 1945-77' in Bromley, M. and Stephenson, H. 1998. *Sex, lies and democracy : the press and the public*. New York: Longman.: 87. See also Snoddy: 76.

[1265] Williams, *Britain's media*: 66, Levy, *Press Council*: 4.

[1266] Snoddy: 83-4. Berry: 4-10.

[1267] O'Malley T., 'Demanding Accountability: The Press, the Royal Commissions and the pressure for reform, 1945-77' in Bromley, M. and Stephenson, H. 1998. *Sex, lies and democracy : the press and the public*. New York: Longman.: 87.

[1268] Levy, *Press Council*: 5-8, Cole, H., 1952, *Socialism and the press*. London: Fabian Publications.: 26, Curran and Seaton: 289, Snoddy: 83-4.

[1269] Curran, J. 1995. *Policy for the press*. London: Institute for Public Policy Research.: 3

[1270] Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 71, Koss, S. 1984. *The rise and fall of the political press in Britain*. London: Hamilton.: 638, Levy, *Press Council*: 5-8, Snoddy: 84.

[1271] Jenkins, S. 1986. *The market for glory : Fleet Street ownership in the twentieth century*. London: Faber.: 46-7, Jenkins, *Newspapers*: 37., Richards, *The bloody circus*: 176.

closed the *Herald* in its original form. This was despite it having a circulation of over 1.25 million readers, which was twice as large as that of the *Financial Times*, the *Times*, and the *Guardian* put together.[1272] Writers have variously blamed rising newsprint costs, underfunding, the threat of commercial television, lack of interest from its owners, unimaginative reporting and the failure to merge with the *News Chronicle* as reasons for the *Herald*'s demise.[1273] However, many agree that, for the reasons we considered in Chapter 1, its low-income readership was not attractive to advertisers.[1274] The advertising market had narrowed diversity and had reduced Labour representation.

Labour government concerns for its own press representation also combined with a reluctance to go beyond a classical liberal view of the need for minimal anti-monopoly legislation in the 1965 Monopolies and Mergers Act.[1275] The Labour government created it as a response to the second Royal Commission on the Press. It was eventually incorporated into the 1973 Fair Trading Act by the Conservative administration.[1276] The legislation modified the British tradition that refused to provide specific laws for the press.[1277] However, its commitment to diversity was more limited than the Royal commission's. The Labour government rejected the commission's proposal to challenge concentration with an Amalgamations Court.[1278] This would have only been able to consent to takeovers of large circulation dailies or Sunday newspapers by existing paper groups if it could be positively shown that this was in the public interest.[1279] Instead, the

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[1272] Williams, *Get me a murder a day*: 216-8, Chairman's speech to the 1960 AGM, Trade Union Congress Files 790 in Richards, *The bloody circus*, Benn, T. 1979. *The need for a free press*. Nottingham: Institute for Workers' Control.: 5.

[1273] Jenkins, *Newspapers*: 37, Smith, *The British press*: 63, King, C. H. and Granada Television. 1967. *The future of the press*. London: Macgibbon and Kee., Richards, *The bloody circus*.

[1274] Curran and Seaton: 91-3, Williams, *Get me a murder a day*: 216-8, Richards, *The bloody circus*: 27-8, 169-70, 181-2. Gardner, C. 1979. *Media, politics and culture : a socialist view*. London: Macmillan.: 121, Benn, T. 1979. *The need for a free press*. Nottingham: Institute for Workers' Control.: 5.

[1275] Snoddy: 85-6, Tunstall, *Newspaper power*: 380-1, Stephenson H., 'Tickle the public: Consumerism rules' in Bromley and Stephenson: 22, Robertson, G. 1983. *People against the press : an enquiry into the Press Council*. London: Quartet.: 121.

[1276] Curran, J., 'The different approaches to media reform' in Curran, J., Campaign for, P. and Broadcasting, F. 1986. *Bending reality : the state of the media*. London: Pluto in association with the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom.: 288, 289.

[1277] Tunstall, *Newspaper power*: 380-1.

[1278] Robertson, G. 1983. *People against the press : an enquiry into the Press Council*. London: Quartet.: 121, Stephenson: 22.

[1279] Levy, *Press Council*: 15-16, 405.

Government called for such takeovers to be investigated by the Monopoly and Mergers Commission. In the same minimalist vein, it upped the Royal commission's recommendation for the size of a press group's newspaper circulation needed for an investigation to half a million.[1280] As such, the law had a negligible impact on arresting concentration.[1281]

Instead, the Government's concern for Labour representation tainted the proposals for diversity. The Labour administration gave the Secretary of State discretion to not refer takeover bids if she regarded the titles as being not otherwise economically viable.[1282] As Jeremy Tunstall asserts, the Labour government worded the discretion loophole clause deliberately vaguely so that Prime Minister Harold Wilson could interfere to preserve Labour support and discourage its enemies. In the event, he says, the party could not rely on its supporters to buy newspapers, so Wilson seems to have encouraged the leading contender with the hope of some reciprocal gratitude come the next election.[1283] Tunstall lists the cases of the *Times* in 1966-7 and the *Sun* in 1969 where Labour governments agreed to buy-ups and where there were political motives for approval. There were more subsequently.[1284] Stephen Koss also sees a political motivation in the case of the then Labour-supporting *Sun*. He reports that the Cabinet was divided over whether to oppose a planned merger of IPC and Reed, which was supposed to mean the end of the title. However, tellingly, Wilson regarded action against the then *Daily Mirror*'s owners as political suicide.[1285] Labour representation was seen as more important than diversity.

[1280] Tunstall, *Newspaper power*: 380-1 Stephenson: 22, See also Curran, *Policy for the press*: 4, Humphreys, P. 1996. *Mass media and media policy in Western Europe*. Manchester ; New York: Manchester University Press : 94-5.

[1281] An indication of the law's modest impact is that 150 ownership transfers were accepted up to 1993, including those of the *Times*, *Sunday Times*, *Today* and the *Observer*. Only three requests involving more minor newspapers were refused. (Curran, *Policy for the press*: 4. See also Humphreys, *Western Europe*: 94-5).

[1282] Levy, *Press Council*: 410, Robertson, G. 1983. *People against the press : an enquiry into the Press Council*. London: Quartet.: 121, Tunstall, *Newspaper power*: 380-1, Negrine, R.M. 1998. *Television and the press since 1945*. Manchester New York; New York: Manchester University Press : 174. See also Dunnett, P.J.S. 1988. *The world newspaper industry*. London: Croom Helm.: 122.

[1283] Tunstall, *Newspaper power*: 380-1.

[1284] Tunstall, J. 1983. *The media in Britain*. London: Constable.: 265.

[1285] Koss, S. 1984. *The rise and fall of the political press in Britain*. London: Hamilton.: 667.

Appendix to Chapter 3: Policy Transfers and Practicality

INTRODUCTION

Were any of the schemes the Labour Party considered practical? As indicated, many of the schemes debated in the party for restructuring the newspaper ownership were policy transfers from other parts of Europe. The 1990s saw most major Western European nations, bar West Germany and the UK, providing state subsidies to the press to aid diversity.[1286] Among the more successful schemes for sustaining plurality have been those instituted in Sweden and Norway, which have included advertising tax and subsidy schemes, state advertising diversification and targeted subsidies. Also, comparable to the schemes discussed by Labour for democratic control within press organisations have been government laws established to provide a degree of influence by journalists. We shall consider attempts at broader community accountability with rights of reply legislation later in this work.

However, no simple policy transfer and no complete analogy can be made between any of the solutions that were followed in Norway and Sweden and those that were called for in the British Labour Party, for at least three reasons. In the Scandinavian countries, as we have indicated, there was a broadly continuous tradition of Labour movement representation by means of a party press. Also, especially in Norway, the newspaper market has been much more dominated by the local press for geographic, topographic, cultural, economic, social and political reasons.[1287] Importantly, the vast proportion of the money involved in the Scandinavian schemes has been used to safeguard existing diversity, which had been preserved with the survival of a party press and competition

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[1286] See, for instance, Humphreys, *Western Europe*: 102-5.

[1287] Another contrast is that the introduction of commercial television as a source of competition for advertising came much later, to protect the press financially. (Murschetz, Paul, and Media The European Institute for the. 1997. *State support for the press : theory and practice : a survey of Austria, France, Norway and Sweden.* Dusseldorf: European Institute for the Media.: 116, 135-6, 195-6, Murschetz, Paul. 1998, 'State support for the daily press in Europe: A critical appraisal', *European Journal of Communication* 13, 291-313.: 301)

within the local press. Only a small fraction has been used to encourage new publications, in contrast to what was envisaged by some of the more ambitious schemes for Britain.

Nevertheless, there are indications of how some of the social market proposals based on radical Keynesian-style conceptions of economic management could successfully work in practice.[1288] They can be contrasted with the hyper-concentration of the British newspaper industry in the same period. In the Scandinavian countries, the justification for the subsidies, as with some of those more clustered around the New Left involved in British Labour Party proposals, was that the closure of newspapers had hampered the press's role in a democratic system.[1289]

SWEDEN

Advertising Tax and Subsidies

Along with direct general aid that goes to political parties, Sweden's main direct subsidy has been a selective one, first introduced in 1972.[1290] Like the proposals made by Moonman and Richardson and others in the Labour Party, here subsidies are financed by a cross-media advertising tax. It is paid to those in a weaker market position, compared to their more powerful rivals. Also, in a similar way to proposals made within the British Labour Party, the subsidies have paid for a proportion of the aided papers' newsprint.[1291] A Press Support Board distributes the money.[1292] A comparable scheme has operated in the Netherlands, where the subsidy is paid for by a levy on television advertising.[1293]

[1288] Curran, Press Reformism: 46.
[1289] *Fact Sheets on Sweden*: Mass Media, Stockholm: Swedish Institute, 1999: 1
[1290] Murschetz, Europe: 294.
[1291] Murschetz, *State support for the press*: 124.
[1292] Swedish Ministry of Culture website, accessed May 3 2001, http://kultur.regeringen.se/inenglish , Curran, Press Reformism: 46
[1293] Humphreys, *Western Europe*: 105-7, Sanchez-Tabernero, Alfonso, and Alison Denton. 1993. *Media concentration in Europe : commercial enterprise and the public interest.* [Manchester]: European Institute for the Media.: 231, Brandt, Kees and McQuail, Dennis. 1997. 'The Netherlands', Pp. 168-184 in *The media in Western Europe : the Euromedia handbook*, edited by Stubbe Ostergaard Bernt and Group Euromedia Research. London: Sage.: 158-9.

The tax and subsidy system has operated as the main provision of the scheme which, in the words of the author of one cross-national survey, "...has been widely seen as the model...".[1294] As was argued by those pressing for such a scheme in the Labour Party, the justification for *selective* subsidies in Sweden has been the operation of advertising. Two-thirds of the Swedish morning newspapers' revenue has been estimated to come from advertising. This advertising power has operated in what has seen to be as the 'circulation spiral', which affects the less successful newspapers disproportionately, the so-called No.2 titles.[1295] Bifurcation has been less of a problem.

Because of this role of advertising, Swedish research has shown that there is a very strong link between the percentage of households a newspaper covers in the area in which it sells – that is, its coverage as opposed to, say, actual circulation – and the paper's profitability.[1296] It has been on this basis that selective subsidies have been directed – to those newspapers with coverage of 40% or less.[1297] Research by Swedish subsidies expert Karl-Erik Gustafsson convincingly indicates that if a general subsidy had been paid, instead of the selective one, all the low-coverage newspapers would have gone under. As he puts it: "Market forces operate selectively. Countermeasures must also be selective."[1298]

Swedish financing has met some opposition. The parties to the right of the Social Democrats have tended to support general subsidies, which have benefited their newspapers, normally in a stronger market position, and opposed an advertising tax.[1299] They have been concerned that the demands of the dailies of the Social Democrats and its minor coalition partners has shaped provision.[1300] Indeed, in Norway, it was in order to avoid an advertising tax-financed subsidy system that right-wing newspapers supported

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[1294] Humphreys, *Western Europe*: 106.
[1295] Gustafsson, Karl-Erik. 1980. 'The press subsidies: a decade of experiment' in *Newspapers and democracy : international essays on a changing medium*, edited by Anthony Smith. Cambridge, Mass.;: MIT Press.: 117-120, Murschetz, *State support for the press*: 124.
[1296] Gustafsson: 117-120, Murschetz, *State support for the press*: 124.
[1297] Murschetz, Europe: 303.
[1298] Gustafsson: 120-1.
[1299] *Ibid.*: 116-7.
[1300] Murschetz, Europe: 302.

subsidies, despite initial reluctance.[1301] For most of its time in operation, the Swedish advertising levy more than paid for the subsidy. For instance, in 1995 the tax revenue was twice the subsidy paid out.[1302] The tax was reduced when the 'bourgeois' government came into office in the late 1970s, leading, for a time, to a net loss. Other critics have argued it should be replaced by a more integrated system "... proportionally levying the yearly advertising volume of a title to be paid by the advertiser...".[1303] This would, of course, share significant elements with the Advertising Revenue Board proposals made by those such as Curran and included in *People and the media* and later Labour-supported schemes.

The system has had problems, which Curran, for instance, is less clear in acknowledging.[1304] The Swedish system has not entirely halted moves to concentration. By 1997, the 15 biggest newspaper owners accounted for about 85% of circulation of all newspapers with more than two issues a week.[1305] It has not been entirely successful in sustaining a Labour movement press and aiding democratic citizenship. The newspapers have not represented the political preferences of the population, especially those of the left. About half of Swedish voters supported Social Democrats and, to a far lesser extent, the Communists, for many years. Yet, their press was only about one fifth of circulation.[1306] More recently, with readers now less ready to read the party press, newspapers are becoming more independent of the parties and the political legitimation for subsidies is weakening.[1307] The situation has not improved. The Labour Party newspaper group, The *A-Pressen*, was restructured in 1993-4, after it went bankrupt.[1308] The Swedish Trade Union confederation, the LO, relinquished control of the major tabloid *Aftonbladet*. However, the new owners vowed to retain the paper's social democratic orientation.[1309]

[1301] Murschetz, *State support for the press*: 124.
[1302] *Ibid.*: 153, 190, 193, Murschetz, Europe: 301.
[1303] Murschetz, *State support for the press*: 131, 193.
[1304] Curran, Press Reformism: 46.
[1305] Gustafsson: 215-7.
[1306] Swedish Institute. 1999. *Fact Sheets on Sweden*: Mass Media, Stockholm: Swedish Institute, 1999: 1
[1307] Murschetz, Europe: 303, Swedish Institute: 1.
[1308] Gustafsson: 215-7, Murschetz, *State support for the press*: 164-5.
[1309] *Ibid.*: 215-7.

Nevertheless, compared to the British press system, what is *more* notable is the Swedish subsidy system's *success* in using similar methods to achieve similar aims as those in the British Labour Party.

Concentration has by no means approached the British level. According to one expert, the selective subsidies have stopped some newspapers gaining the monopoly position they wanted to achieve.[1310] Until the early 1990s, according to one cross-national study, as was the case in other Scandinavian countries, the press subsidy system helped provide for a relatively low level of media concentration and thus did not make necessary for it to be complemented by other strict regulation.[1311] Since then, as the pressure to oligopoly has increased, so the Swedish government and its Norwegian counterpart have started considering setting limits on the market share that each media firm can possess. In Sweden, the government now has committed to providing laws on ownership plurality.[1312] One writer sees the move to anti-monopoly legislation and new rigid ownership rules in Sweden and Norway, as displaying a "...fit of neo-liberalism".[1313] However, there is an argument that press subsidies are not enough to avoid concentration and that *effective* controls on oligopoly can be used in tandem to defend plurality.[1314]

Moreover, importantly, despite fears to the contrary, diversity has been achieved without the state politically interfering in the press or impairing the newspapers' watchdog role. Paul Murschetz describes Sweden as "...a shining example of a country which has a politically neutral allocation of subsidies to its press".[1315] Gustafsson has emphatically rejected claims that newspaper independence has been forfeited.[1316]

[1310] Gustafsson suggests: "The subsidy system complements the market system." (*Ibid.*: 124-5).
[1311] Sanchez-Tabernero and Denton: 238.
[1312] Swedish Ministry of Culture website, accessed May 3 2001, http://kultur.regeringen.se/inenglish .
[1313] Murschetz, Europe: 304, 305.
[1314] James Curran is among those who sees British anti-monopoly controls as ineffective. See for instance, Curran, Press Reformism: 45.
[1315] Murschetz, Europe: 303.
[1316] "There is no evidence that subsidies have had any effect on their criticism of the exercise of power by the government." (Gustafsson: 121).

Also, while the spread of the press has not accurately represented political preferences, the party press subsidies "...are regarded as essential if the loss of a voice articulating a particular point of view is seen as impoverishing society as a whole".[1317] The press's attachment to parties might be weakening, but this should be put in perspective. It was still the case in the late 1990s that: "...almost all newspapers declare[d] a political loyalty through their editorial pages".[1318] It is true, nevertheless, that the Labour movement press has suffered in the recent past. Nonetheless, Sweden was one of the Scandinavian nations in which for good number of years, there "...survived a Social Democratic press which was the envy of Labour parties the world over".[1319] While it might be argued that other factors had been central to this, such as the strength of the Social Democrats and the division among its opponents, the existence of subsidies cannot be ignored. Furthermore, it is undeniably significant that the LO no longer owns the tabloid *Aftonbladet*. Nevertheless, official surveys have since classed the paper, which is the largest newspaper in both Sweden and Scandinavia as a whole, and *Arbetet* (number eight in Swedish circulation) as Social Democratic newspapers.[1320] Also significantly, it was neither circulation problems nor reader desertion from the social democratic dailies that caused *A-Pressen*'s bankruptcy. Instead, it was victim of the recession, which had seen advertising revenues massively fall.[1321]

Overall, both commentators and regulators agree that the Swedish press structure would be different without the tax and subsidies.[1322] Its "...strange Robin Hood device..." has "...helped preserve plurality of politically aligned newspapers in many cities that would otherwise have become subject to newspaper monopolies".[1323] Without them, *Arbetet* and the conservative *Svenska Dagbladet* wouldn't have survived, as one cross-national survey

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[1317] Murschetz, Europe: 303.
[1318] Murschetz, *State support for the press*: 139, 151.
[1319] Humphreys, *Western Europe*: 107.
[1320] Both according to 1998 circulation figures, (Swedish Institute: 1, Schibsted corporate website, www.schibsted.no)
[1321] Murschetz, *State support for the press*: 164-5.
[1322] *Ibid.*: 117. The Swedish Institute's view is that: "It is inconceivable that the subsidy system could be abolished without immediately jeopardizing a very large number of newspapers." (Swedish Institute: 1).
[1323] Sanchez-Tabernero and Denton: 228. It has been successful in its goal of maintaining a minority political press and, by 1998, a choice of local press in 19 Swedish regions – one less than previous years. (Gustafsson: 216).

notes.[1324] As even the sceptical Murschetz admits, subsidies have played a "key role" in saving newspapers. The subsidies have preserved "...freedom of information which the market has arguably failed to provide".[1325]

NORWAY

State Advertising

A system similar to the policy transfer proposed in the Labour Party's *The people and the media* and later party policy has also been enacted successfully with state advertising. In Norway, state advertising is distributed between all newspapers. This practice is defended on the basis that helps make state information available to as many citizens as possible. But apart from this, its justification is that it keeps newspapers alive.[1326]

The system has had the effect of counteracting the influence of advertisers, who back circulation winners. In contrast, government advertising has treated all publications more equally. Rather than leading to state bias, its proponents argue that it has ended the possibility that there might be partiality in the allocation of government advertising. One commentator argues that it has been a "...great help..." in sustaining papers. In fact, in order to strengthen this aspect, it was agreed in 1991 that the state would be able to target its advertising to the newspapers second in their market, which most suffered from losing advertising revenue.[1327] This was going a step further than what was proposed by British Labour activists. A fear could be that such targeting, which may well be used to sustain papers with a similar political allegiance as the leading government party, could smack of political patronage. Yet, the previous system, similar to that proposed for Britain, had operated effectively.

[1324] Humphreys, *Western Europe*: 106.
[1325] Murschetz, *State support for the press*: 189.
[1326] Civil service job vacancies are published in all daily newspapers. The state has to advertise in all relevant newspapers when it is conducting more specialist promotion. (Skogerbø, Eli. 1997. 'The press subsidy system in Norway', *European Journal of Communication*. Vol 12(1): 105, Murschetz, *State support for the press*: 133-4, 193).
[1327] Murschetz, Europe: 134, 145

Targeted Subsidies

Aside from government advertising redistribution, Norwegian governments have also implemented a relatively successful system of direct press subsidies. One reason why it cannot be directly compared to the solutions provided in the Labour Party has been that the state has directly provided the subsidies. Labour party activists ruled out this policy transfer because it would not be politically acceptable. As already indicated, Norwegian right-of-centre newspapers' hostility to an advertising tax led them to reluctantly back subsidies financed by the public purse. Nevertheless, Norwegian subsidies have some similarities to Labour Party proposals. And their operation again indicates that a subsidy system is both practically possible and can be relatively effective.

In Norway, direct subsidies have been dispensed since 1969. They were instituted in response to the closure of a series of newspapers.[1328] Like Sweden, a major justification for the system has been to enhance political democracy.[1329] The bulk of the subsidy provided is for production. This provides a certain amount for every copy sold of a newspaper.[1330] In a relatively similar way to the proposals made in *The people and the media* and later Labour Party proposals, some subsidies are targeted. In the Norwegian system, they have been channelled to those papers that are the second largest in their particular market, the so-called 'No. 2s' and the smallest newspapers. Those that are seen to be 'national opinion newspapers' also get extra support. Again, in a familiar fashion to the proposals agreed in the Labour Party, direct subsidies are also made to publications that represent a social or political interest group or a special target group. Examples are political party newspapers and those representing immigrant or disabled groups. Importantly, while all this targeting has meant a large role for bodies in allocating funds, at the same time, rules have also been introduced to prohibit state interference in editorial policy.[1331]

[1328] Skogerbø: 102.
[1329] Murschetz, Europe: 291, 303.
[1330] Østbye, Helge. 1997. "Norway." Pp. 169-184 in *The media in Western Europe : the Euromedia handbook*, edited by Stubbe Ostergaard Bernt and Group Euromedia Research. London: Sage.: 173.
[1331] The Norwegian Ministry of Cultural Affairs, *Media in Norway*, The Norwegian Ministry of Cultural Affairs website, accessed May 3 2001, Skogerbø: 106-7, Østbye, Norway: 173.

While noting problems with the subsidy system in Norway, two senior Norwegian media analysts have considered its operation as a "success" or at least "partly successful".[1332]

Subsidies have preserved diversity. While they have accounted for only 2% of total press income, they have ensured the survival of many No. 2 publications.[1333] One survey by Sigurd Høst noted that the system greatly reduced the further development of monopolies in the 1970s and 1980s. In the period from 1972 to 1989, second dailies' numbers reduced by a third of that in the period between 1952 and 1966.[1334]

For those from Britain concerned about promoting a Labour movement press, the subsidy system has had some achievements, but they have faded to a degree. Yet, it is in promoting a more diverse press beyond party boundaries that it has more recently been most successful, in line with those more associated with the Labour new left pushing for subsidies.

It was the 'No. 2' subsidy that supported the Social Democratic papers.[1335] It maintained the world's strongest Labour movement press for 30 years. Yet, it is true, as with Sweden, that part of the justification for this has gone as the strong ties between political parties and the press have loosened.[1336] The situation appears bleaker for proponents of a Labour movement party press, than in the 'golden age'. In the years up to 2002, the Labour Party and the press have nurtured more informal links with each other and the newspapers have been acting more independently. An important shift has been that *Norsk Arbeiderpresse*, the former press co-operative of the Labour movement, transformed

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[1332] Høst, Sigurd. 1991. "The Norwegian newspaper system: structure and development." in *Media and communication : readings in methodology, history and culture*, edited by Helge Ronning and Knut Lundby. Oslo: Norwegian University Press.: 295, Skogerbø: 108.
[1333] Østbye, Norway: 174.
[1334] Høst, Sigurd. 1991. "The Norwegian newspaper system: structure and development." in *Media and communication : readings in methodology, history and culture*, edited by Helge Ronning and Knut Lundby. Oslo: Norwegian University Press.: 295.
[1335] Skogerbø: 110.
[1336] See for instance The Norwegian Ministry of Cultural Affairs, *Media in Norway*, http://odin.dep.no/kkd/engelsk/ , accessed May 3 2001. Skogerbø situates this press and party separation within the wider framework of the dealignment of voters and parties. (Skogerbø: 117).

itself into the business *A-pressen* in 1992. In 1995, the Labour Party sold its shares in this company.[1337] However, despite these developments, it should be noted that the ties of the company with the Labour movement were by no means been broken in the period we are considering. The chairman of the company's board was a senior figure in the Norwegian Trade Unions federation, the LO, and the chair and a sizeable number of the firm's corporate assembly were representatives of trade unions.[1338] Of the newspapers that the chain owns, a number still have ties to the Labour movement.[1339] And senior commentators still regard these newspapers as 'Labour press'.[1340] Indeed, the strength of this press can be indicated by the fact that one out of six newspapers sold came from this chain, making it still stronger than any other Labour press in the Western world.[1341]

Nevertheless, a broader cultural and political diversity has become the justification for Norway's policy. It has been decried that this has happened by default.[1342] However, to claim that this means that the subsidy no longer aids political diversity is to entertain a narrow conception of political diversity, shared by those in the British Labour and trade union movement who, as this thesis outlines, merely strove for a Labour movement press. The evidence for those in Britain on whether there were dangers in having press closely tied to the parties, including the Social Democrats, is mixed. One expert considers that the link with parties hampered the newspapers' watchdog role and delayed the introduction of professionalisation into Norwegian journalism.[1343] This consideration should not be overstated, however. There is no evidence that journalists on subsidised papers have been less critical or original than their profitable newspaper counterparts, according to another commentator. Nor, on a different note, is the assumption that subsidies prevented innovation and rationalisation been born out by the available data.[1344]

[1337] Skogerbø: 113, *A-pressen* website, www.apressen.no ., accessed May 4 2001.
[1338] *A-pressen* website, www.apressen.no ., accessed May 4 2001.
[1339] Skogerbø: 114.
[1340] *Ibid.*, Østbye, Norway: 173.
[1341] Østbye, Norway: 173.
[1342] Skogerbø: 110, 112, 113.
[1343] Svennik Høyer, *The Norwegian Press*, The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, accessed May 4 2001.
[1344] Skogerbø: 110, 111.

The most powerful example of the system's effectiveness, and an example of a wider conception of political diversity fostered by the subsidies, has been the creation of the national daily *Klassekampen*. Curran views the Norwegian subsidy system as being the most effective because it has provided for diversity by aiding the establishment of new newspapers, like this left-wing title, often critical of the Norwegian government.[1345] It is one of a number of smaller specialist newspapers, others of which address Labour, Christian Democrat and agricultural interests. This newspaper, with a national profile, was founded as a low-frequency publication the same year that subsidies were introduced in 1969. The paper became a weekly in 1973 and a six-day paper in 1977.[1346]

If the Norwegian subsidy system was said to have partially failed, this deficiency was, to some degree, that it did not combine press subsidies with media concentration legislation. In 1999, this was tightened up. The government's Media Ownership Act created an independent body with power to intervene when there are media acquisitions. It had already taken action in its first year of operation.[1347]

Generally, though, the subsidy system has been fairly effective in providing for diversity. The Norwegian system has maintained a large number of newspapers and a high level of readership.[1348] It is widely regarded by commentators that this can, at least partly, be attributed to the press subsidies. While about a 100 new newspapers and 83 old papers had gone to the wall in the years from 1952 to 1989, 69 new newspapers have been

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[1345] Curran, Press Reformism: 46.

[1346] The Norwegian Ministry of Cultural Affairs, *Media in Norway*, The Norwegian Ministry of Cultural Affairs website, accessed May 3 2001, Høst, Sigurd. 1991. "The Norwegian newspaper system: structure and development." in *Media and communication : readings in methodology, history and culture*, edited by Helge Ronning and Knut Lundby. Oslo: Norwegian University Press.: 287, 297.

[1347] Roger Ingebrigtsen, State Secretary, The Norwegian Ministry of Cultural Affairs, 6th European Ministerial conference on mass media policy, Cracow, Poland, 15-16 June 2000, The Norwegian Ministry of Cultural Affairs website, accessed May 3 2001.

[1348] Subsidies have been important in sustaining the highest circulation press per capita in the world – almost twice that of Britain. This is for papers that come out more frequently than weeklies (The Norwegian Ministry of Cultural Affairs, *Media in Norway*, The Norwegian Ministry of Cultural Affairs website, accessed May 3 2001). While newspaper readership has gone down in most countries, in Norway it has maintained its high level, or even slightly increased. This is despite regional radio and television and the advent of an Internet press, which could have been expected to make a larger impact in a society with many more isolated communities. Each household is estimated to read 1.65 newspapers a day. (Svennik Høyer, *The Norwegian Press*, The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, accessed May 4 2001.: 1).

created and stood the test of time.[1349] The total number of newspapers also increased from 199 in 1972 to 218 in 1995.[1350] Some medium-sized newspapers have folded.[1351] However, it has been estimated that if subsidies were abandoned, local competition and second newspapers would largely disappear. While there has been a process of concentration, analysis has shown that subsidies have slowed down this process.[1352]

JOURNALISTIC INFLUENCE IN EUROPE

Similarly, across Europe, there are legal sanctions to provide for a measure of influence and protection of journalists, as have been considered by some in the British Labour Party. In Austria, in laws similar to those suggested by Ascherson and the social market proponents in Britain, journalists have 'freedom of opinion' so they can refuse to involve themselves in work that conflicts with their own personal views. Also, in Sweden, journalists can refuse to write stories that offend a code of conduct, although this right is based on collective negotiation, not law. [1353]

In Germany, in a more minimal version of calls by some in the Labour Party, journalists have been given some voice on editorial policy after company statutes were introduced. In the Netherlands, similar statutes are in collective labour agreements. In addition, in France, journalists and editors have rights to full severance benefits if they resign or are sacked when a publication's ownership changes. In Austria, journalists are paid severance pay if they leave a newspaper because its political direction shifts. However, a trans-national enquiry notes that stronger protection of journalistic independence is limited across Europe to specific newspapers. These are those owned at least partly by

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[1349] Høst, Sigurd. 1991. "The Norwegian newspaper system: structure and development." in *Media and communication : readings in methodology, history and culture*, edited by Helge Ronning and Knut Lundby. Oslo: Norwegian University Press.: 296.

[1350] Skogerbø: 110. It may not be clear that many of the new newspapers succeeded because of the subsidy system. This is implication of what is said about all the Scandinavian countries by Professor Gustafsson in his interview with Paul Murschetz. (Murschetz, Europe: 306). But the subsidies have provided important incentives for newspapers in this sector. (Skogerbø: 109-10).

[1351] Svennik Høyer, *The Norwegian Press*, The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, accessed May 4 2001.: 1.

[1352] Skogerbø: 109.

[1353] Humphreys, *Western Europe*: 108-9.

their workforce and/or by independent trusts, with their own editorial statutes, where shareholdings are widely spread by statute. The French newspapers *Le Monde* and *Libération* are examples of newspapers part-owned and controlled by their employees.[1354]

CONCLUSION

So, to answer the question posed at the start, some of the solutions posed by those in the Labour Party have been shown to be practical when applied in other parts of Europe. It is true that no simple comparison can be made between proposals made in the British Labour Party and the practice of press subsidy in Sweden and Norway. For instance, it is a relevant question to consider if schemes for *maintaining* diversity can be directly compared with schemes to *promoting* it. It may well be that this Scandinavian approach would have come too late in Britain, for instance, where left newspapers like the *Daily Herald* had already gone to the wall and there was already a high level of ownership concentration, for instance in the local press. This is an argument put forward by those, some connected with the Labour new left, calling for a more directly statist approach.[1355]

Nevertheless, for about 30 years, the operation of subsidies in the Scandinavian countries has shown that this kind of aid can work to maintain some diversity. Without it many newspapers, some providing an alternative point of view to the more profitable papers, would have gone under. Failures to sustain plurality may well have due to the absence of ownership legislation, which is now being rectified. This provides an important lesson for Britain where any subsidies would have to be implemented in tandem with tighter ownership rules. There also may well have been problems, not least the diminution of a party press, which have brought the subsidies system into question. However, in Norway, at least, the subsidy system has provided for cultural diversity. And part of its strength is that it has aided the creation of a newspaper like *Klassekampen*, an example of a new political press not associated with the old party political and Labour movement newspapers. Meanwhile, proposals made in the Labour Party for some measure of

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[1354] Humphreys, *Western Europe*: 108-9.
[1355] See Curran and Seaton.: 343.

democratic accountability for the press, by those who work in them, particularly of a social market variety, have echoed the schemes put into practice in Europe. However, greater participation has been limited to a few individual newspapers.

Appendix to Chapter 5: The CPBF And The Right of Reply

The CPBF was influential in pushing an agenda for control of the press in the Labour Party in this period. Thus, there was now a movement demanding press democratic accountability, as well as diversity.[1356] Set up by the print unions, and officially launched at the 1980 TUC conference, its key activists were print workers. Curran remembers that those involved were from a layer below the leadership, different from those who represented the unions in Labour Party meetings.[1357]

The CPF/CBPF and the Labour Party were linked from the start of the campaign. The tie with the party went from the highest level to the grassroots. Party leader Michael Foot became a sponsor of the campaign in 1982 and donated money, although little seemed to be made of this.[1358] More than 100 constituency Labour parties affiliated to the campaign in its first year, according to its internal minutes.[1359]

A sizeable number of the 64 original sponsors were Labour MPs, including Roy Hattersley, a former minister who had witnessed the scuppering of the Minority Report proposals at first hand.[1360] The original 13-person steering committee also included another similarly placed former minister, Michael Meacher. Others were long-time party media activist Curran and the two previously-mentioned *Labour Weekly* journalists, Frayman and Ross.[1361] Along with Curran, Meacher and Frayman were also convenors of the organisation's working groups and were seen as key representatives of the

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[1356] People involved with it organised as a first conference one on 'Democratic Accountability in the Media'. Key support and involvement in the early stages of the campaign came from the printing union SOGAT. (CPF. 1981. *National Committee Report to the 1981 Annual General Meeting*, May 9 1981). It should be said that some print union leadership's support for trusts and co-operatives evaporated when it was perceived that such forms of organisation could threaten their own union's representation. (Jenkinson, Sal. 1981. 'Co-operatives don't threaten trade unionism', *Free Press*, No. 9, September/October 1981, Owen O'Brien, 'Correspondence to the CPBF from NATSOPA General Secretary Owen O'Brien' (internal correspondence)). We shall consider later a more notable example of this phenomenon.

[1357] Curran interview, Curran, Press Reformism: 49.

[1358] Anon. 1982. '£50,000 appeal boost', *Free Press*, No. 13, May/June 1982.

[1359] John Jennings, 'CPF Secretary's Report to AGM 1982', April 1982: 5 (internal correspondence).

[1360] Richardson and Power: 209-10.

[1361] Richardson and Power: 209.

campaign.[1362] Curran and Harriet Harman were among those who spoke at campaign events, urging it to make the party a key focus of its work.[1363] Tom Baistow was also involved in the CPF. Indeed, by 1982, its secretary could report that, because many campaign members were involved in the study group: "...we've been able to work closely, if informally, with the Labour Party in the formulation of policy".[1364]

A key campaign that the CPBF became associated with Labour was on the right of reply. It operated as an important link between the unions and Labour Party activists on this issue and other press ownership concerns at this time. The right of reply was a significant development in its own right and an illustration of this changing attitude to democratic involvement of those working in the press. More importantly, the struggle to get it on to the statute book was probably the most prominent campaign on press control in which the Labour Party was involved in this period.

The Industrial Right of Reply

The right of reply has not always been so clearly associated with democratic control of newspaper production. However, the industrial right of reply has that imprint. The industrial right of reply was the attempt by the unions to use their collective strength to affect the content of the press, and the media generally, which they produced. They did this in order to seek redress for those they saw as wronged by the papers involved. Overwhelming, those seen as ill-treated were fellow trade unionists. Mostly, the industrial right of reply took the form of using industrial muscle to seek a reply to an article regarded as inaccurate or biased. On occasion, it involved refusing to publish such an article, if threats of action failed. It had a history stretching back to 1926 when one of the catalysts for the General Strike was the refusal of *Daily Mail* machine assistants to print an attack on trade unionists. After the strike, the print workers agreed with owners that they would not sanction industrial action that interfered with editorial control. This held until 1970, when a cartoon satirising a 'typical trade unionist' was printed only after

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[1362] Anon. 1980. 'Press On', *Free Press*, No. 1, February 1980 and *Free Press*, No. 2, May 1980.
[1363] CPBF, 'Response to the Freedom Association' no date (internal correspondence).
[1364] John Jennings, 'CPF Secretary's Report to AGM 1982', April 1982: 5 (internal correspondence).

the *Evening Standard* management agreed to print a statement opposing it from all the *Standard* chapels. As one media activist put it: "For the first time in half a century, access to newspaper columns – and the unaccountability of multinational publishers – [had]... become a real political issue for workers in Fleet Street."[1365]

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was a spate of instances when the printers used their power to secure a reply to newspaper coverage seen as slanted. Titles involved included the *Daily Mail* during the 1974 miners' strike; the *Times* in 1977; the *Observer* over a Freedom Association advertisement on the Grunwick dispute the same year; and the *Daily Express* in its coverage of the People's March for Jobs in 1981.[1366] The coverage of the health service workers' dispute was a high point for the industrial right of reply. In a bid to pre-empt poor coverage, the trade unions organised links between themselves and media unionists. The printing union, the NGA, pressurised Fleet Street managements with calls for industrial action. Fleet Street electricians went on a 24-hour strike in support of the health workers. The NGA secured unpaid advertisements in a number of titles supporting the health workers and backing the right of reply. At the *Daily Mail*, after the management refused to print a reply to an editorial criticising sympathy action by national newspaper workers, the title decided to print the editorial as a blank space.[1367]

When the study group discussed the right of reply, it reprinted it in full and considered the CPBF's pamphlet on this question in 1981. The campaign situated the right in this publication within the key themes we have been concerned with. The CPF saw it as a question of democratic control and community access. It was needed because the public had "...no control over what the papers say. Nor do we have any right of access to their columns." [1368]

[1365] Power, Mike. 1982. 'Bandying words with the barons', *New Socialist*, November/December 1982. See also Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 48-9, Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, 'Right of Reply – History' (internal document).
[1366] CPBF, Right of Reply. See also O'Malley and Soley: 129.
[1367] Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, 'Right of Reply – History' (internal document), Richardson and Power: 199-200, Paul Routledge, 'Sparks fly over health dispute', *Free Press*, September/October 1982. See O'Malley and Soley: 80.
[1368] RD754 Media Study Group Feb 1981 Campaign for Press Freedom, 'Right of Reply': 2.

At this stage in the right of reply's history, the campaign shared the view that the unions would impose this reply, rather than the state. The procedure the campaign envisaged was that if a group or individual published a 'story which distorts the facts', then they could write a succinct letter to the editor for publication. If this was unsuccessful, then the individual or group would make contact with the trade unionists employed on the title. It would then be up to the union to decide whether the case was "...sufficiently serious to merit a reply". If so, then the union would negotiate with the relevant employers. The nature of this would be up to the union, but it could include the union negotiating a comprehensive agreement for dealing with right of reply issues. If this was unsuccessful, then the campaign supported the union taking industrial action to achieve its goal. The point would not be for the union to censor offending copy but to publish a reply.

But what would be the basis for a union right of reply? The CPBF suggested that this should be when the issue was of public importance and when the "bias or distortion" was seriously damaging. It saw the industrial right of reply's advantage explicitly in terms of democratic control and access. It encouraged "...trade unionists working [in] the newspaper industry to consider the content of the press and their own role in producing it; and to work out, by democratic means of discussion and decision-making, ways to compensate for [the] misuse of the press, and to extend access to it".[1369] Thus, the campaign originally regarded the union as the democratic arbiter of a right of reply.

In the period after 1979, the TUC shared a similar view. Its 1980 conference backed a right of reply motion, proposed by the NUJ and backed by the printing unions. It instructed the TUC's General Council to examine ways in which unions, particularly those in the media, could "...apply pressure on newspaper and broadcasting employers ...". This pressure would, among other things, ensure different opinions got a hearing; individuals were not subjected to victimisation because of bias; and a right of reply was

[1369] RD754: 6, See also Campaign for Press Freedom, 'Right of Reply: a statement', *Free Press* No. 3.

secured for such victims.[1370] It is important to note that there was no mention of the Government or the courts being involved. Following this in 1981, the TUC General Council backed moves by unions to achieve a voluntary agreement with editors over a right of reply.[1371] Thus, in the years we are considering in this chapter and this appendix, the TUC and the CPF both supported the industrial right of reply.

The Legal Right of Reply

What is not so extensively chronicled in other accounts of the right of reply is the shift that took place from this to demands for a *legal* right of reply.[1372] In a shift to a less radical position, the Labour's NEC study group rejected the industrial right of reply in favour of a legal form of redress.

The position it and other others espoused came to dominate Labour's thinking on the right of reply. As already indicated, the Labour Party had backed policy on this in 1975 and again in 1979. However, rather than seeing the unions as the arbiter of this, it regarded the Press Council, an example of self-regulation by the newspaper industry, as the body which would be appropriate to uphold this.[1373] In this period, however, figures in the Labour Party lost faith in self-regulation.[1374]

A majority of the party's Media Study Group were also uneasy about the power the industrial right of reply gave to the unions, however. Labour Party representation was one concern here. Study group members feared that hostile forces would not take kindly to Labour-supporting unions using industrial muscle to have input on what was printed.[1375]

[1370] Trades Union Congress. Annual, Conference. 1981. *Report of the 113rd annual Trades Union Congress*. London: T.U.C., Anon. 1980. 'Labour movement's "yes" to Campaign', *Free Press* 3, 1980. It indicated its support for the Campaign for Press Freedom's right of reply campaign in the interim.
[1371] Trades Union, Congress. 1983. *The Other side of the story : a TUC report on redress against abuses by the media*. London: Trades Union Congress.: 8-9.
[1372] O'Malley and Soley and Allaun, *Spreading the news*.
[1373] Labour Party, *Conference 1975*: 362, 1979, Labour Party, *Conference 1975*: 383-4.
[1374] O'Malley and Soley: 72-83.
[1375] NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 10th meeting', 22 June 1981. In a book brought out under the name of the chair of the study group, Frank Allaun, who became a leading advocate of the legal right of

However, the press also opposed the legal recourse. Baistow notes that attempts to get a legal right of reply onto the statute book were "...universally savaged by the qualities as well as those populars that could spare the space to mention it".[1376] Allaun attracted the wrath of the *Sun*, for instance.[1377]

Yet, in 1981, as the minutes put it, group members were more concerned that a union-based recourse "...would be more difficult to justify than a legal right and would attract more adverse comment".[1378] Indeed, Allaun and fellow study group member Michael Meacher later told the House of Commons that instituting a legal recourse was a way of avoiding an industrial right of reply being exercised.[1379] Study group members considered that the response of print workers in demanding redress "...would not necessarily be socialist".[1380]

At its ninth meeting in May 1981, the media sub-committee viewed the position of the campaign, with its support for union action, as an 'interim proposal' and started to look more sympathetically at a right of reply not based on the unions.[1381] By June, under pressure from Curran, who was disposed towards an industrial recourse, it agreed to include support for union action only as a "...step towards the implementation..." of the legal variant.[1382] This move was followed by the TUC. A 1983 pamphlet it produced on the question did not even mention the history of the industrial reply. It backed a legal solution.[1383] The CPBF, at first rather uneasily, also followed suit to seek a legal path.[1384]

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reply, the unions' attempts to secure such a right were described as "... unsatisfactory and arbitrary...", while recognising that they were effective. (Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 49).

[1376] Baistow, Tom, Geoffrey Sheridan, Mike Power, Press Campaign for, and Freedom Broadcasting. 1984. *Labour daily? : ins and outs of a new labour daily and other media alternatives*. London: Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom.: 106.

[1377] It saw him spearheading a campaign "...orchestrated by Labour's backwoodsmen to shackle this country's free press". The paper viewed that "...his lunatic plans to force newspapers to allow what he grandly calls a 'right of reply' to aggrieved people..." gave Allaun the chance to "...let all the pent-up venom of his years as a political nonentity flood out". Quoted in O'Malley and Soley: 80.

[1378] NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 10th meeting', 22 June 1981.

[1379] HOC 18 February 1983, 573, 617-8.

[1380] NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 4th meeting', 20 November 1980.

[1381] NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 9th meeting', 18 May 1981.

[1382] NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 10th meeting', 22 June 1981.

[1383] TUC, *Other side*: 21.

[1384] By 1982, its national committee had endorsed the legal method "...in principle...", but still wished to "...look more closely at the details of how this would apply and operate in practice." A conference

Tom Baistow, who, as we have seen, was hostile to printing workers having a major input into press editorial decisions, championed a state solution within the study group.[1385] The idea of a legal right of reply was to protect ordinary people who were subject to untrue or distorted reports. It would cover those cases where people could not invoke libel laws either because the distortions did not involve libel or the plaintiffs could not afford to take this legal recourse.[1386] It gave individuals, firms or organisations the right to require a newspaper to print a reply to a factually inaccurate report of equal length and position as the original report. It would apply across both the press and broadcasting sectors.

While, by this stage, it was clear that the group favoured a legal recourse, it was not so apparent what forum would oversee this. Instead, there were wrangles between the study group, the Home Policy committee, the Press and Publicity and the NEC, indicating the complications with a legal right of reply.

In another example of policy transfer, the study group agreed that it should consider the experience of other countries. It would contact sister parties to assess how effective the laws applying in their countries had been.[1387] Most other countries that have considered a right of reply have gone down a legal statutory route. This is the case with France, West Germany, Italy, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Luxemburg and Spain.[1388] In order to assess what sort of media model is associated with a state right of reply, it is worth noting the diverse political colouration of the regimes that brought in these laws. It has included

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organised by the campaign felt the right of reply was not enough on its own. And one insider indicated later that year that "...sharp differences..." still existed within the campaign on the worth of this statist approach. (Jennings, Anon.1982. 'Does the 'right of reply' campaign go far enough?', *Free Press*, No. 13, May/June 1982, Power, Mike. 1982. 'Bandying words with the barons', *New Socialist*, November/ December 1982).

[1385] NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 6th meeting', 19 January 1981, RD 661 Tom Baistow, 'The Right of Reply', RD 816 April 1981 Tom Baistow, 'The Rights of Reply/Media Study Group Right of Reply Draft', CPBF, *Labour daily?*: 106.

[1386] CPBF, *Labour daily?*: 106.

[1387] NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 7th meeting', 16 February 1981, NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 9th meeting', 18 May 1981,.

[1388] Dewall Gustaf, von. 1997. *Press ethics : regulation and editorial practice*. Dusseldorf: European Institute for the Media.: 21, 37-8, 55, 63-4, 104, Paraschos, Manny. 1998. *Media law and regulation in the European Union : national, transnational, and U.S. perspectives*. Ames, Iowa: State University Press.: 79-81, Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 75.

Christian Democrat and clerical, as well as Social Democratic, governments.[1389] This was a policy transfer that was regarded as politically acceptable, yet the question of proximity of values of the countries concerned was less of a factor. This was because the political identity of the governments that enacted the right of reply were much more variable.

By its ninth meeting in May 1981, the study group agreed with Baistow's proposals for a legal right of reply, based on his assessment of other states. This provided the basis for the party's public position, published as a NEC statement on the right of reply. This document was another example of policy transfer, as experiences of states' reply legislation in France, West Germany and Denmark were outlined in some detail in the relatively short document.[1390]

However, the NEC did not directly follow the example from any of these countries to provide a forum for adjudicating on this reply. The study group agreed that legal tribunals, the composition of which would be finalised later, would enforce the new law.[1391] Yet, the Home Policy Committee, in October 1981, expressed its concern about courts being used to enforce these sanctions and had pressed for a specially-created independent tribunal to decide.[1392] The NEC finally agreed that the public position of the party would be, in effect, a fudge. Adjudication would either be by a court or an independent tribunal, with appeal to a High Court. However, whichever way the legal adjudicating entity was constituted, it would provide a legally enforceable decision. A minor injection of industrial democracy was also included. Either body could make decisions in consultation with working journalists, with a tribunal having a journalist on its committee.[1393] But an important point was that in either case this would be a state-sanctioned body, closely linked to the judicial system.

[1389] Dewall: 37-8, 55, 63-4, 104, Paraschos: 79-81, Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 75, World Statesmen website (Europe), http://www.geocities.com/bcahoon.geo/EUROPE.html

[1390] Statement by the National Executive Committee: The Right of Reply, Labour Party March 1982. The TUC replicated this policy transfer. (TUC, *Other side*: 18-9)

[1391] NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 9th meeting', 18 May 1981, Freedman, 2000: 182.

[1392] NEC Media Study Group, 'Minutes of the 12th meeting', 19 October 1981.

[1393] RD1084: National Executive Committee 'Right of Reply: Amendments to Draft Statement (RD:1027)', Statement by the NEC.

The other details of the legal right of reply that were agreed in 1982 do not need to concern us in such detail. As a policy transfer, they explicitly borrowed most from the French model and would provide individuals and organisations with the right to reply when any media were inaccurate or had grossly distorted information.[1394] There would be the threat of a tribunal or court administering a £40,000 fine if this was not carried out within three days.[1395] These were outlined to the 1982 Labour Party conference. Allaun saw such measures not as a panacea, but as "...a first step towards democracy..." in the media.[1396] This position was reiterated in Labour's Programme 1982 and the demand for a legal right of reply, without all the details spelt out, made it into Labour's 1983 manifesto.[1397]

While in the process of being agreed as party policy, Allaun, with backing from the Labour front bench, introduced a Bill into the House of Commons in 1981 and 1982 to give a legal right of reply. With some support across the parties, it had similar provisions as that called for by Labour, with decisions to be made by a court. Allaun again presented it in December 1982 and it was given its second reading in February 1983 when it was debated.[1398] Allaun cited the experience of legislation in other countries, which indicated it was as an example of policy transfer.[1399] The party's front bench rejected the voluntary approach provided by the Press Council. Shadow home secretary Roy Hattersley viewed the right of reply as essential as the British press was particularly polarised.[1400] Another Labour member, Barry Sherman, saw such a reply as a chance for independent citizens to have a voice in the media. The absence of this was a "...big gap in our democracy...".[1401]

But there were still concerns from the Labour ranks regarding the role of the courts in the reply. On the one hand, Sherman could identify with the Bill as he was not for the power of the "...big trade unions..." – a legal right to reply had taken them out of the picture.

[1394] RD 1092 October 1981 Amendment from the Media Study Group to RD 1027.
[1395] Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 104.
[1396] Labour Party, *Conference 1982*: 240-3.
[1397] *Ibid.*: 214-5, Dale: 181.
[1398] HOC, Vol. 37, 18 February 1983, col 527-636, O'Malley and Soley: 80-1.
[1399] *Ibid.* col. 574.
[1400] *Ibid.* 586-7, O'Malley and Soley: 80-1.
[1401] *Ibid.* col. 611.

But the media activist and MP Philip Whitehead preferred that a Swedish-style statute-backed ombudsman would adjudicate, rather than a court. He also wanted its introduction linked with a reduction in other state controls on the press as a "...quid pro quo". He saw it could be linked with a relaxation of the libel laws to give more protection to journalists in what they could report without prosecution.[1402] Both the CPF and the NUJ only supported the Bill with reservations at this stage.[1403]

As it was, the Conservative government opposed it. It only attracted 90 votes, ten short of what it needed to go onto the next stage, as many Labour MPs did not bother to turn up for the vote. This indicated that, despite the intense interest of some, there was also apathy among Labour members concerning challenging the press and media in general.[1404]

[1402] *Ibid.* col. 602-3, 605-6.
[1403] Jennings, O'Malley and Soley: 81, citing NUJ, 'Press Statement from Jonathan Hammond, president NUJ': London, NUJ, 17 February 1983.
[1404] HOC, Vol. 37, 18 February 1983, col. 637, CPBF, *Labour daily?*: 106.

Questioning the right of reply

Freedman, while discussing broadcasting policy, argues that the view that bias could be dealt with by the state was a retreat from the more radical stance in *The people and the media* that causes of bias could be tackled through restructuring the media itself.[1405] As we have seen, this argument can be substantiated when it comes to press policy. However, the process is not entirely straightforward. It is certainly true, as we have indicated, that parliamentary attempts to introduce such legislation focused attention on the right of reply rather than other measures. Yet, the study group, the Home Policy committee and the NEC saw the right of reply as providing a short-term answer to what they saw as editorial bias. They were at pains to point out that it came as part of a package. At least during this period, it was not meant as a substitute for longer-term solutions, such as anti-monopoly measures and initiatives for more diverse ownership.[1406]

Nevertheless, these proposals on ownership were not as radical as those presented in *The people and the media* with regard to one area – democratic ownership. The industrial right of reply was a foray into that territory. In contrast, the adoption of a state tribunal as the method for achieving a reply could represent some sort of retreat, or at least a shift to the right, from one of its antecedents. It could represent a change to a more social democratic idea of a positive role for a beneficent impartial state than the industrial right of reply. The industrial variant implied a version of workers' control.

A statement like this poses many questions. One is: can we consider a right of reply as a democratising measure? The answer, in part, depends on the forum deciding on it. From a democratic point of view, both industrial and legal approaches are an advance on the notion that the word of the proprietor and/or editor is law and there is no other forum to consider inaccuracies. However, both also represent only a limited advance. The first

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[1405] Freedman, 2000: 183. This was also the view of the editor of the NUJ journal, Ron Knowles. (Anon. 1982. 'Does the 'right of reply' campaign go far enough?', *Free Press*, No. 13, May/June 1982).
[1406] RD 816 April 1981 Tom Baistow 'Media Study Group Right of Reply Draft', RD 1027 August 81 Home Policy Committee Press and Publicity Committee, 'The Right of Reply Draft NEC statement', RD 1112 October 1981 Home Policy Committee, 'Draft NEC statement', Statement by the NEC. Michael Meacher also expressed a similar view in the debate on the Right of Reply Bill in 1983. (HOC, Vol. 37, 18 February 1983, col. 616).

leaves the union as judge and jury. The latter just provides for an unelected judge or another court procedure. The democratic nature of that would be largely determined by how a tribunal was appointed or elected. Labour advocates' justifications for a legal solution were instructive in this regard. Allaun, as we have seen, regarded a union-based solution as arbitrary. This may have been so, but that indicated a more general 'problem' of democracy – that of relying on people's will. In this case, it meant relying on the democratic will of the narrow, albeit significant, section of the population that actually produced the newspapers in question. To advocate using the courts was to rely on the state in one of its less democratically accountable forms.

Nevertheless, an industrial right of reply also begs a number of questions. With it, it would be implicitly left up to the unions to assess if distortion had taken place and how serious it was. As was suggested, it could be argued that a union was a more democratic forum for discussing distortion than the minds of an unelected individual editor or of those in a newspaper's management. Yet, by arguing this, there is the danger of again substituting the worker for the community.[1407] More promising might have been an elected community press council. An obvious series of models for this could have been the now defunct community health councils. These were introduced partly to compensate for the lack of direct democracy within local NHS management. A similarity with what we are envisaging is that they played an advocacy role for complainants. However, a major difference is that members of these councils were not directly elected, but were appointed and mostly represented 'professional' rather than 'lay' opinion.[1408]

Another major problem for an industrial right of reply came with the unions. In order to seek a reply, they refused to print newspapers or particular articles. Even the CPF in its early days, based as it was on the unions, asserted in its 'official' history that the right of reply was not censorship and it did "... not favour 'blacking' copy...". However, it was perhaps less clear when

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[1407] One answer to this, which still betrayed these workerist tendencies was put forward by the editor of the CPBF's journal, Geoffrey Sheridan, called for a 'workers press council' based at a local level around trades councils and the wider community to monitor the press and demand the right of reply. This suggestion would have prioritised one section of the citizenry, around trades councils, over others. (Sheridan, Geoffrey 'Workers' press councils the answer', *Free Press* 3).

[1408] Boaden, Noel. 1982. *Public Participation in Local Services*. Harlow: Longman: 120-6.

asserting that the principle did not "...intend to interfere with the normal autonomy of editors".[1409] What needed to be explained here was the definition of 'normal'. The autonomy of editors *was* being challenged. The challenge was to the ability of editors, and those companies to which they were responsible, to print what they wished without redress. As for Labour's legal redress, Allaun views the experience in other countries was one where laws did not put excessive pressure on editors but promoted "...self-regulation...".[1410]

A further difficulty has also been with the definition of what should constitute grounds for a right of reply. Both Labour's official position on a right of reply and the industrial variant went beyond simply targeting inaccurate reporting. The official NEC and party stance was that there would be the opportunity for legal redress when the media, including the press, had grossly distorted information – in other words, when it was biased.[1411] It might be considered that this would be difficult to implement, as distortion would be difficult to measure. Unless distortion was very clearly defined, it could be argued that a danger was that partisan journalism would be a target of a right of reply. Indeed, a similar point was made by one media-owning Conservative MP – who much later would have cause to regret his dealings with the press – in the course of the Commons debate on such a reply. Jonathan Aitken argued that a difference with the West German right of reply, and a reason why there were few attempts to secure redress in that country, was that that nation's laws did not confuse misrepresentation with factual inaccuracy. Replies were only available based on factual inaccuracy.[1412]

On this point, if one compares the grounds for a right of reply with other national laws, this is indeed instructive. It is the case that the state laws in countries such as Belgium, West Germany and Denmark have only permitted a right of reply for inaccuracies, not biases. [1413] However, the laws in countries such as France and Italy have entertained a wider definition of when a reply can be sought than factual error or even proven

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[1409] Richardson and Power: 199.
[1410] Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 104.
[1411] RD 816 April 1981 Tom Baistow 'Media Study Group Right of Reply Draft', RD 1027, RD 1112, Statement by the NEC.
[1412] HOC, Vol. 37, 18 February 1983, col. 609.
[1413] Paraschos: 79-80, Dewall: 21, 63-4.

damage.[1414] Indeed, in Luxembourg, the law has provided no definition of the type of offence open to reply in the act. Thus, even those who are praised in articles are theoretically open to a right of reply.[1415] As we have seen, it was the French law of 1881 that the Labour Party's position was most clearly based on. There, it does not matter whether the article is not correct or defamatory for a right of reply to be legally sought.[1416] Nevertheless, it is claimed that this has not impaired the ability of reporters to do their job. One commentator, writing for an organisation that promotes journalistic freedom, considers that the law is widely accepted by journalists and it has not had a "chilling effect" on reporting.[1417]

Nonetheless, it should be noted that the fuller expression of Labour's position in *Labour's Programme 1992* considered that the right of reply would explicitly tackle biased press reports by using the law and fining editors. It was thought the legislation would "...mitigate the worst effects of editorial bias...".[1418] Now, this might mean that politically influenced information would be excluded, as it would be seen as biased. This would cut across any aim of promoting political diversity in the press and would seem to be a major state intrusion into newspapers' operation. Alternatively, it could be that a sizeable amount of what some would see as biased would not be regarded as such by the courts. In such a situation, the assertion in *Labour's Programme* would be inaccurate. In other words, either the right of reply would be ineffective in countering bias or it would be heavily intrusive. Also, it is hard to see the logic of targeting the individual editor rather than the group s/he was working for.

A final question mark hanging over the legal right of reply is that it could be used to stifle investigative reporting. The left journalist Paul Foot rejected it, as it would hamper his work. Foot viewed that it would provide an impediment to investigating the powerful,

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[1414] Dewall: 21, 37-8, 104, Paraschos: 79-81, Roger Errera, 'Press Law in France', in Article 19. 1993. *Press law and practice : a comparative study of press freedom in European and other democracies.* New York: Article 19.: 68.
[1415] Paraschos: 81
[1416] Dewall: 37-8, Errera: 68.
[1417] Errera: 68.
[1418] Labour, Party. 1992. *Labour's programme for Britain: annual conference, 1992.* London: Labour Party.: 214-5.

who would use such laws to erase the few criticisms he has been able to make of them in his work. One indeed would imagine that it would leave a publication like Foot's *Private Eye* magazine open to being filled with as many replies as original articles. In responding to this criticism, Allaun, for example, has little answer, beyond asserting that the right of reply is not a panacea.[1419] A more sophisticated defence came from a then prominent CPBF member and printer Mike Power. He seemed to view that Foot's central thrust was a criticism of reformism: "Paul Foot's main point is that the campaign for a legal right of reply attempts to create balance in a class-driven society where none can possibly exist. That hopeless position can be applied to any effort to change or introduce new laws."[1420] If considered in the sense of reformism, the point is well made. However, a question over the right of reply which the debate on investigative journalism points to, is not that a legal right of reply *fails* in an attempt to provide balance in society, but that it *does not attempt to do so*. Instead, it narrowly focuses on the question of balance in one sector – the media – without necessarily considering the effect of this on society as a whole.

So, an argument that has been made for a legal right of reply is that it is a way for ordinary people to achieve a reply in the media in a society where the rich and powerful "...have PR minders to ensure *their* right of reply".[1421] However, there is little to say that these same PR people would not exploit this legal right. One can envisage a new cottage industry among public relations officers whose job it would be to provide replies whenever an article challenging to business or other organisations was made in a newspaper. The threat of a percentage of the title being given over to these replies could well enhance the reluctance of press owners and editors to sanction any investigative reporting. An indication of how it could be employed was that one Conservative sponsor of Allaun's Bill backed it because it would give the right of reply to businesses that felt they were unfairly treated in the media. He gave the example of one firm that had gone downhill after it felt that it had been dealt with badly in a broadcast report. Although it

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[1419] Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 93-4, 104.
[1420] P. Foot, 'Paul Foot on right of reply' *Free Press* No. 26, M. Power, What are we going to do about Paul Foot?', *Free Press*, No. 27, January/February 1985, quoted in O'Malley and Soley: 84.
[1421] CPBF, *Labour daily?*

was not clear that the report was inaccurate, it was seen to be sensational. In the mind of the MP, this was enough for the firm to be able to secure a full right of reply.[1422]

Thus, it can be seen that if the idea of a right of reply is to challenge or redress power, then its effect needs to be considered in relation to society as a whole. The press owners and their interconnected interests are not the only power. The question is not whether a right of reply provides a balance in society, but whether it further imbalances it. This discussion is related to that of journalistic autonomy and the relationship of the institutional power of the press and propreitors to the power of capital as a whole and the power resources at capital's disposal. The debate is whether, while enhancing community control of the press, a right of reply also strengthens corporate control of it.

[1422] HOC, Vol. 37, 18 February 1983, col. 609: 618-9.

Appendix 1 to Chapter 6: The New Press and Media Strategy

At the start of the Kinnock years, there was some agreement between the leadership and the rest of the Labour Party about how to deal with press bias. There was support for measures to bring diversity at all levels. There was also hostility to working with the Conservative newspapers, even before the fallout from the Wapping dispute. In 1984, for example, deputy leader Roy Hattersley announced that it was not worth the party working with the *Sun*, *Mail*, *Express* and *Telegraph*. Hattersley told the Guild of British Newspaper Editors' annual conference in April 1984: "The day has gone when you can excoriate an MP one day and hope for his cooperation with a human interest story on the next."[1423]

Yet, as we saw, during Kinnock's time as leader, the demand for diversity had started to change. It became considered less important for getting a fair deal and was seen by some as counterproductive. How could you get the press on your side if you were challenging its ownership? The MP Austin Mitchell, as we saw in this chapter, publicly voiced this conundrum. The Labour hierarchy started to place little stress on structurally changing newspaper ownership and demands on this score became less radical.

The *News on Sunday*'s collapse provided another watershed. A title that was seen to be in the Labour movement press tradition had failed. The Labour leadership and its officials had been involved in its formation. Only those on the left saw this as a failure of Government policy.[1424] Instead, it was merely another confirmation that the goal of a Labour movement press, which had had its highpoint with the McCarthy Report, was fading. For some, this reinforced the view that there needed to be more emphasis placed on other methods to get a fairer view of the Labour Party in the press. Both the Labour Party and the trade union movement felt this. As a senior TUC official told the author, the failure to set up a Labour movement newspaper provided a major reason why the

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[1423] Anon. 1984. 'Hattersley flays the bias of Fleet Street', *Free Press* 23, May 1984.
[1424] Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 62.

momentum which had led to the setting up of the TUC's Media Working Group had "...more or less run its course".[1425]

Also, journalism's changing structure was important. A significant and ironic shift came with the Wapping move and the assertion of employer power over journalists, as indicated by disputes such as Pergamon, mentioned in the chapter. Bottom line pressure has cut the number of journalists. Tunstall notes that national newspaper journalists' workload increased significantly from the 1960s to the 1990s.[1426] The irony of this was that as Labour policies to challenge this example of employer power faded into the background, so the new techniques to challenge bias through the new media techniques became potentially more effective. As employers cut journalist numbers, there was a premium on getting stories with minimum effort and time. At the same time, the PR industry's influence strengthened dramatically. Britain has not been unique in experiencing this. One expert has estimated that there are 20,000 more PR agents than journalists in the US.[1427] So, Labour strategies to provide journalists with more accessible and effective copy, in order to counteract bias, pushed at an open door.

As has been implied, this idea of trying to influence the press was not new in the party. Wring notes that Labour formed its Press and Publicity department in 1917.[1428] Yet, the perceived media bias in the 1920s and 1930s, especially in print, had led Labour to develop other political communication methods.[1429] There was a professionalisation of campaigning following World War Two. In fact, Clement Attlee appointed the first full-time Downing Street press secretary in 1945.[1430] The 1950s saw Labour's media campaigning develop, with the advent of widespread television broadcasting. Labour

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[1425] Mike Smith, interview with author, October 1 2002.
[1426] It is difficult to accurately calculate by how much, however. (Tunstall, *Newspaper power*: 136, 137).
[1427] McChesney, *Corporate media*: 25-6, citing Stauber John, C., and Sheldon Rampton. 1995. *Toxic sludge is good for you : lies, damn lies, and the public relations industry*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.
[1428] Wring, *Political marketing and organisational development*: 4.
[1429] Although the 1918 election saw some impartiality, this was short-lived. The *Daily Mail*'s notorious Zinoviev letter which claimed Bolshevik support for Labour prior to the 1924 election dealt a bitter blow MacDonald's minority government, which went down to defeat. This contributed to a hostility to the press, the existence of which provided a barrier to the promotion of Labour policy other means for promotion. (Wring, *Political marketing and the Labour Party*: 64-5).
[1430] Baistow, *Fourth-rate estate*: 76.

introduced what has been identified as the 'persuasional' schema, where the media was targeted. Nascent spin doctors pursued sympathetic journalists.[1431] Wilson was an acute practitioner of that approach, with loyal lieutenants such as Gerald Kaufman and Joe Haines. As we saw, this approach had fallen into disrepute after the 1970 election failure.

By 1983, there was a pressure to deal with the press by reverting to a reinforced persuasional stance. An indication that some of those who previously sought other methods of Labour representation now backed this strategy was that one of the Minority Report's co-authors led this new approach. David Basnett successfully proposed to the 1983 conference that a Campaign Strategy Committee to professionalise party campaigning be set up following the election defeat. He saw that there was a need for "...greater professionalism in handling the media...", as part of an organisational revamp.[1432] The 1983 conference also saw the MP Joe Ashton inform delegates that what was needed was to use the press and media, as the SDP and the Liberals had done in that year's election.[1433] He implied this was a better strategy than changing it. Ashton indicated that Labour was concentrating on developing policy rather than getting it across.[1434]

The new leader could justify going in this direction by pointing to Labour's performance in the 1983 election campaign, where, as indicated, the preparation was chaotic.[1435] As indicated, importantly, this was seen to be a product of left scepticism about political

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[1431] Wring, Dominic. 1995. "Soundbites versus socialism: The changing campaign philosophy of the British Labour Party." *Javnost* 4:59-68.

[1432] Labour Party, *Conference 1983*: 36, Shaw, *1979*: 54 and Wring, *Political marketing and the Labour Party*: 159.

[1433] Former engineer Joe Ashton has been an MP since 1968. He was a newspaper columnist for, variously, the *Daily Star*, the *Sunday People*, the *Sheffield Star* and *Labour Weekly* for most of the period from 1970 until 1988. He was Labour spokesman on energy from 1979-1981. (2001. *Who's who : an annual biographical dictionary*. London: A & C Black.: 65).

[1434] Labour Party, Conference. 1983. *Report of the annual conference of the Labour Party*. London: Labour Party.: 208-9.

[1435] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 46, Hattersley, *Who goes home?*: 241-2, Heffernan and Marqusee: 29-30, Harris, Robert. 1984. *The making of Neil Kinnock*. London: Faber.: 203, Franklin, *Packaging politics*: 132, Butler, David, and Dennis Kavanagh. 1984. *The British general election of 1983*. London: Macmillan.: 275-7. For instance, the head of Press, Publicity and Advertising was only first appointed at the start of 1983 and just one of three press officer posts had been filled by the start of the campaign. (Franklin, *Packaging politics*: 132, Heffernan and Marqusee: 30).

communication techniques.[1436] There were, however, other reasons for the disarray. It has also been noted that the trade union right and Shadow Cabinet, who dominated the 1983 campaign, refused to promote the policies agreed by the party, leading to chaos.[1437] One party official sees that right-wing-dominated campaign did not play to Foot's strengths.[1438] Nevertheless, in an already media-saturated age, it is true that Foot was a poor television performer.[1439]

Accounts of those involved have emphasised the view that Kinnock and his advisers shared the concern that the campaign had been poor and saw a problem of professionalism. According to insiders, a BBC *Panorama* programme, *The Marketing of Margaret*, profoundly influenced them to do the same for Labour. Broadcast soon after the election, this contrasted the professionalism of the Labour and Conservative campaigns.[1440]

The new strategy, centralisation and the SCA

More importantly, though, in a sense, Kinnock shared the view that there had been a problem of a weak leadership, in hostage to more powerful forces. However, he did not regard the trade union right and the Shadow Cabinet as the malign forces. Rather, he blamed the activist membership, especially its left, as we have seen.

As such, the renewed development of a media focus was both important in itself and a significant part of the organisational changes to distance policymaking from influence by the party membership. It was part of the start of a new centralisation process, which we referred to at the start of Chapter 5. Power was concentrated in the hands of the

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[1436] Wring, *Political marketing and the Labour Party*: 144-5, Shaw, *1979*: 26.
[1437] Heffernan and Marqusee, Wainwright, Hilary. 1987. *Labour : a tale of two parties*. London: Hogarth.
[1438] "There was a general feeling of complacency. There was a feeling of not caring just as long as you got the right wing back in control." (Tricia Sumner interview, February 6 2002).
[1439] Shaw, *1979*: 26, Butler, David, and Dennis Kavanagh. 1984. *The British general election of 1983*. London: Macmillan.: 271-2.
[1440] Interview with John Underwood, former Labour Party Director of Communications, in Philo, Greg. 1993. 'Political Advertising, Popular Belief and the 1992 British General Election' in *Media, Culture and Society* 15:3, July: 407-418: 410, Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 292, Wring, *Political marketing and the Labour Party*: 153-5.

leadership, at the expense of the activists and the NEC. This press and media strategy provided an integral part of this process, which went beyond answering any problems of political communication in the previous election. In this, Kinnock mirrored the advice given to him by the LCC executive. This called on the leadership to restructure Labour's 'management structures' as part of this newly reinvigorated media focus and identified concerns with the NEC's role.[1441] The party leadership and officials sought to utilise the press and the media to present information to potential supporters. It also employed sophisticated research techniques to gauge public opinion.[1442]

As Wring indicates, many of the political communication changes that came after 1983 did not concern Labour's relationship with the press. He emphasises that a continuity existed with the media and marketing strategy which operated since 1945, where Labour employed professional marketing consultants, with relative degrees of sophistication. But this strategy had been stifled by the 1970s. As he indicates, many of changes were not about press promotion, they were about transforming the party to appeal to what the leadership and the strategists considered were the electorate's views.[1443] We shall consider this aspect in a moment.

Under the guise of injecting professionalism, but also strengthening leadership power, the Campaign Strategy Committee was instituted in 1983 and then press and media presentation and campaigning were brought together into a new Campaigns and Communications Directorate (CCD) in 1985, responsible to the leader's office.[1444] Peter Mandelson, who had been a television producer on the programme *Weekend World*, was appointed the CCD's first director in 1985.[1445]

[1441] Paul Convery, 'Letter to NEC Members', no date, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archive.
[1442] Taylor Gerald, R. 1997. *Labour's renewal? : the policy review and beyond.* Basingstoke: Macmillan.: 12, Shaw, *1979*: Shaw, *1945*, Seyd, Patrick, and Paul Whiteley. 1992. *Labour's grass roots : the politics of party membership.* Oxford: Clarendon Press..
[1443] Wring, *Political marketing and organisational development*: 13.
[1444] As Wring argues, the CSC was another example of the "...myriad of bodies that collectively diluted the authority of the once hegemonic National Executive". (Wring, *Political marketing and the Labour Party*: 161).
[1445] Hughes and Wintour: 53, Paul Webb, 'Britain: The 1987 Campaign' in Farrell David, M., and Shaun Bowler. 1992. *Electoral strategies and political marketing.* Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire [England] ; New York: Macmillan Press : St. Martin's Press.: 50, McSmith, Andy. 1996. *Faces of Labour : the inside story.* London: Verso.: 255.

Mandelson's appointment saw a more sophisticated *media centred* strategic orientation compared to what had gone before.[1446] Mandelson indicated how powerful he saw his post by how he defined his role. It included "...deciding what we say, how we say it and which spokesmen and women we choose to say it".[1447]

Under Mandelson, the Shadow Communications Agency (SCA) was instituted. Self-styled marketing and PR expert Philip Gould coordinated it. Mandelson oversaw presentation to the media while Gould busied himself with interpreting voter preferences.[1448] Gould reported to Mandelson who amplified Gould's diagnosis and evaluations.[1449] The SCA liaised predominantly with the Leader's Office, largely with Kinnock's press secretary Patricia Hewitt and his chief of staff, Charles Clarke, as well as MORI pollsters.[1450] By 1986, the Campaign Management Team oversaw campaigning. It included Hewitt, Clarke and party general secretary Larry Whitty.[1451] This structure weakened the NEC's influence.

Gould is among those who credit themselves with suggesting the SCA's formation.[1452] But it is worthwhile noting that the LCC's original suggestion, included in Kinnock's private papers, advised employing the team behind the GLC campaign, who, indeed, became of the core of its personnel.[1453]

[1446] Wring, *Political marketing and the Labour Party*: 209.
[1447] Franklin, *Packaging politics*.
[1448] Panitch and Leys: 221, Gould, *The unfinished revolution*, Shaw, *1979*.
[1449] Hughes and Wintour: 54.
[1450] Charles Clarke was a former president of the National Union of Students who headed the leader's office through all Kinnock's years as leader. He then became the chief executive of consultancy firm Quality Public Affairs before being elected an MP in 1997. He was appointed Minister of State in the Home Office in 1999. (2002. *Who's who 2002 : an annual biographical dictionary*. London: A. & C. Black.: 407 and 2000. *Dod's parliamentary companion 2001 : 168th year*. London: Vacher Dod.: 120).
[1451] Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives, Shaw, *1979*: 62, Minkin, *Contentious alliance*: 415, 419.
[1452] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 55.
[1453] Paul Convery, 'Letter to NEC Members', no date, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives. SCA 'Management Group meeting minutes', April 29 1986, Hughes and Wintour: 55, Shaw, *1979*: 57, McSmith, *Faces*: 246. For a description of the GLC's advertising campaign see Korner, J. 1985, *Selling The GLC: The Anti-Abolition Campaign*, BA dissertation, Polytechnic of Central London.

The SCA also included a sub-group of volunteer newspaper and magazine journalists sympathetic to Labour.[1454] It regarded targeting the press as a key part of its work. Soon after being employed, Gould conducted a 'Communications Review'. He concluded that the "...main medium of communication for key target groups appears to be tabloid newspapers." Targeting the media, including the press, provided the most low cost/high coverage form of political promotion.[1455]

The period from the mid-1980s saw Labour targeting the agenda-setting mass media. This was a central feature of the market-led strategy.[1456] The press was particularly important because of agenda-setting. Mirroring an influential concept in media research, the SCA publicly opined that: "Political advertising is too weak a tool to change people's minds. What it can do is influence what is on people's minds – and it is the political agenda which largely determines the election outcome." The SCA strategists believed that voters' opinions were not easily modified. Reflecting a marketised consumer theory of voting, they saw that electors identified with Labour on some issues and the Conservatives on others. Thus, SCA believed the party should emphasise in communications those issues on which it had policies that accorded with the popular sentiment, such as health.[1457]

The strategists considered that issues that the media, particularly television, covered most extensively most powerfully reinforced the voters' agenda. Therefore, setting the agenda meant influencing television programmes' agendas to cover the issues most positively associated with the party. Thus the emphasis, as Gould put it in his first report, should be

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[1454] SCA, 'Summary of Work in Progress: 25 March 1986', Kinnock private papers, Hughes and Wintour: 58, Anderson and Mann: 364. Eric Shaw indicates that the print journalists, together with the broadcasters were little involved in the SCA in the latter period of Kinnock's reign, indicating the bias of the SCA towards advertising experts. (Shaw, *1979*: 215-6).

[1455] Philip Gould, 'Communications Review' December 22 1985, 15, 48, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives.

[1456] Wring, *Political marketing and organisational development*: 13, 16.

[1457] Gould, P. *et. al.*, 'The Labour Party's campaign communications' in Crewe, Ivor, and Martin Harrop. 1989. *Political communications : the general election campaign of 1987*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.: 73, Shaw, *1979*: 60-1, Franklin, *Packaging politics*: 135. See also Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 314, Harrop, M. 'Voters' in Seaton, Jean, and Ben Pimlott. 1987. *The media in British politics*. Aldershot ; Aldershot: Avebury : Dartmouth.: 61, Miller William, L. 1990. *How voters change : the 1987 British election campaign in perspective*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.: 204-7.

to shift the "... campaigning emphasis from grass roots opinion forming to influencing opinion through the mass media".[1458]

How does the press come into this? Strategists believed that the newspapers' agenda would, in turn, affect the political agenda of the broadcasters. Thus Mandelson, particularly, developed a series of contacts in the broadsheet press, among lobby and political correspondents.[1459] It is said he employed a particular combination of threats and flattery towards them.[1460]

News International/News Corporation and the revamped strategy

An important point to note was that there was a particular tension in the press and media strategy with regard to some newspapers. This provides a contrast with the period after 1992. This was a by-product of the Wapping dispute. Rather than using the dispute as an opportunity to develop policy that would actually challenge the press firms' power, including that of News International, Labour concentrated its action on a boycott of the Murdoch-owned titles. This may well have been an effective consciousness-raising exercise and probably dented News International's profits. Yet, it did not follow that the Labour leaders significantly raised the profile of its policy on diversity or democratic ownership of newspapers, or reopened debate on it. Instead, the pressure was for the Labour and trade union movement to boycott speaking to News International journalists.

This was an understandable reaction and showed a willingness to show solidarity with the sacked printers. However, in retrospect, it was counterproductive in dealing with the problem of press bias. It would have had an even more negative effect if it had been applied rigorously. The fact that it wasn't indicated the problems with the policy in regard to this new press and media strategy.

[1458] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 56, Hughes and Wintour: 52, quoted in Shaw, *1979*: 61 and Seyd and Whiteley: 207, Wring, *Political marketing and the Labour Party*: 172.
[1459] Shaw, *1979*: 62, Heffernan and Marqusee: 212.
[1460] Anderson and Mann: 365-6, Gould, B. 1995. *Goodbye to all that*. London: Macmillan.: 217, Hughes and Wintour: 183.

Kinnock at first questioned the ban on News International journalists.[1461] But the NEC, after calls from the print unions and the NUJ, agreed unanimously to a boycott motion. It could have been argued that the motion was ambiguously worded, merely calling for a boycott of the News International *newspapers*.[1462] However, it was taken to mean that Labour barred *journalists* interviewing or receiving information from party members.

This move was counterproductive. The Labour Party excluded papers from which publicity was needed, whatever the level of bias. It laid Kinnock open to accusations that, by withholding information, the party was inhibiting press freedom and undermining the democratic process.[1463] One counterproductive effect of the bar was that the Westminster journalist lobby, decided to not allow Kinnock to lobby meetings. This was because Kinnock refused to answer questions from News International lobby correspondents. The correspondents would not agree on the restrictions on their members, rather than back the sacked print workers.[1464] Instead, Kinnock decided to hold a weekly conference in his Commons' offices to which News International journalists were not invited.[1465] Eileen Jones argues that a by-product of this arrangement was that Kinnock controlled contacts with individual political journalists more directly.[1466] Thus, the policy's side effect was to encourage the idea that particular journalists could be cultivated.

These tensions and difficulties with the boycott came to a head during the Fulham by-election. The candidate Nick Raynsford made clear that he was going to answer questions from all journalists.[1467] The leaders' office also privately urged Kinnock to tell the unions

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[1461] Jones, Eileen. 1994. *Neil Kinnock*. London: Robert Hale.: 80-1, Benn, *The end of an era*: 438.
[1462] National Executive Committee, 'Dispute with News International: Resolution adopted by NEC', January 29 1986, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives.
[1463] Littleton Suellen, M. 1992. *The Wapping dispute : an examination of the conflict and its impact on the national newspaper industry*. Aldershot ; Brookfield, USA: Avebury.: 83
[1464] Neil Kinnock, letter to Chris Moncrieff, January 29 1986, Chris Moncrieff , letter to Neil Kinnock, January 29 1986, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives, Benn, *The end of an era*: 438, Jones, *Kinnock*: 80-1, Littleton: 82-3.
[1465] Neil Kinnock, letter to Chris Moncrieff, January 29 1986, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives, Benn, *The end of an era*: 438, Jones, *Kinnock*: 80-1, Littleton: 82-3.
[1466] Jones, *Kinnock*: 80-81.
[1467] Nick Raynsford was elected MP for Fulham in 1986. He had been director of the London Housing Aid Centre before becoming an MP. He has been Minister for Housing and Minster for Local Government since 1987. (2000. *Dod's parliamentary companion 2001 : 168th year*. London: Vacher Dod.: 270, Roth,

that he would not to impose the boycott during the election. As was noted, if there was a boycott it would have "...utterly dominated..." the election coverage. The leader would have had to call on the candidate to publicly repudiate his position. Not only would News International journalists have needed to be physically barred from entering press conferences, the leader's office raised the spectre that other journalists would refuse attend 'in solidarity'.[1468] Instead, Kinnock's office proposed that all journalists should be admitted to press conferences "...however much we dislike it.". However, the News International journalists would not be given 'exclusive' interviews.[1469] This compromised boycott was publicly observed for the remainder of the dispute.

Kinnock was personally reluctant to curry favour particularly with the News International tabloids, along with the other titles hostile to Labour, for the rest of the time he was leader. Alastair Campbell later described that Kinnock had a different fatalistic view of the press to his. Campbell also did not want to challenge press structures, but to build even more positive relations with them than Kinnock felt able to do. "It was one of the things I used to argue with Neil about – and I completely understand why he found it difficult because they were complete bastards to him – but I held the view that, however bad the press is, it can be worse, and it can be better, and you have to work at it all the time."[1470]

However, as it was, some key Labour figures maintained contact with News International, viewing the ban as counterproductive. The then *Sunday Times* editor says that Mandelson was one. Another who was said to have kept the lines of communication open during the dispute was a little-known Labour politician by the name of Tony Blair.[1471] Blair, in fact, a little later, cemented this early relationship by making *The*

Andrew, and Byron Criddle. 2000. *1997-2002 parliamentary profiles*. London: Parliamentary Profiles.: 1793-6).

[1468] Private correspondence from the Office of the Leader of the Opposition, '15.45: Meeting with unions re Fulham', no date, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives.

[1469] In selling this to the unions, Kinnock was advised: "...you could save this to placate them: no special facilities – eg exclusive interviews/photo sessions – to be given to Murdoch journalists." (Private correspondence from the Office of the Leader of the Opposition, '15.45: Meeting with unions re Fulham', no date, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives).

[1470] Interview with Philip Gould in Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 214.

[1471] Neil: 161.

Times his sounding board. His articles formed a regular column more or less every fortnight for a period in the late 1980s.[1472] A leading member of Kinnock's office even went behind the leader's back to contact Fortress Wapping. As Kinnock's chief of staff Charles Clarke recalls: "I remember I went to see Kelvin MacKenzie at Wapping in January 1992. It's the only thing I ever did without telling Neil beforehand."[1473] Nevertheless, it is important to note, for all the new aspects of the press and media strategy, Labour still regarded News Corporation as a breed apart.

Leaders: seeking press approval and bolstering the leadership

Nevertheless, with this revamped press and media focus, those close to the revamped strategy measured the success of campaigns by the manner with which the press and media treated them. An early notable example of this was the 1986 Freedom and Fairness campaign. Launched with advertising-style 'razzmatazz' and using innovative audio-visual techniques, it yielded a press incomparable for years.[1474] In the days after its launch, praise came from perhaps more expected quarters such as the *Guardian* and *The Observer*. But it also came from less likely newspapers – the *Financial Times*, the *Evening Standard* and the *Economist*.[1475] This was indeed significant. But Philip Gould and supportive commentators accorded these plaudits with a particular importance. They regarded them as the judge of Labour's electability.[1476] Editors and journalists "...were treated as the arbiters of what it was sensible for the party to advocate, in a way that even National Executive members were not".[1477] Yet, this appeared to be a two-way process. The applause for campaigns such as this could well have come, in part, because it showed that Labour had acknowledged the press's importance and influence.[1478]

[1472] Rentoul, John. 1995. *Tony Blair*. London: Little Brown and Co.: 183, 185, 191.
[1473] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 112.
[1474] Shaw, *1979*: 71.
[1475] Leader. 1986. 'The package has come a long way', *Guardian*, April 23 1986, Leader. 1986. 'Labour starts to get its act together', *Observer*, April 27 1986, Leader. 1986. 'Mr Kinnock's new party', *Financial Times*, April 23 1986, Leader. 1986. 'Smile please', *Evening Standard*, April 23 1986, Leader. 1986. *Economist*, April 26 1986.
[1476] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 60-1, Hughes and Wintour: 56-7.
[1477] Panitch and Leys: 221.
[1478] Heffernan and Marqusee: 207.

Also, along with what Wring emphasises, the renewed press and media focus was among the factors that put a premium on the leadership. This conveniently dovetailed with Kinnock's determination to assert leadership autonomy. Labour's communications officers made their allegiance to the leader, rather than the party as a whole, which they were supposed to represent. This was a part of the process where the leader became more powerful in the party in the 1980s, at the expense of Labour's elected forums – the NEC and the PLP.

The SCA argued after the 1987 election that, as the press and media concentrated on the leaders, so leadership promotion would advance the party as a whole.[1479] It is the case that the conventions of the press and media mean that they tend to concentrate on the individual over the more abstract idea – to humanise the story. This certainly meant that, if Labour was to pursue the press, then it should be promoted in a 'personalised' way. This, however, could have been achieved by other methods.

The particular way it happened was to promote Kinnock as a decisive, tough and uncompromising leader, to be contrasted with what strategists perceived as Foot's weakness.[1480] For Mandelson, as two national party workers at the time remember, it meant consciously promoting the leader and his office rather than just the party.[1481] Mandelson's later understudy Colin Byrne carried on this tradition into the 1990s. [1482]

Kinnock's attacks on the left, notably *Militant*, illustrated these two tactics of seeking press and media approval and asserting strong leadership.[1483] His famous speech at the 1985 party conference was applauded by much of the media, some praising it for

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[1479] Hewitt P. and Mandelson P. 'The Labour campaign' in Crewe and Harrop: 53, also quoted in Webb: 56.
[1480] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 51-3, Heffernan and Marqusee: 211, Benn, *The end of an era*: 441-2..
[1481] Mandelson's former deputy, Andy McSmith (McSmith, *Faces*: 257, quoting Wintour, P, *Guardian*, May 30 1991) and the secretary to the Labour Party's arts committee Tricia Sumner (Tricia Sumner interview, February 6 2002).
[1482] Colin Byrne, 'Letter to Larry Whitty', May 24 1991, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives.
[1483] Shaw, *Discipline*: 259, Heffer, Eric. 1986. *Labour's future : socialist or SDP mark 2?* London: Verso.: 61, 74, Panitch and Leys: 217.

showing the smack of strong leadership. [1484] The SCA, and others, justified the attacks as a way of gaining voter support.[1485]

The strategists also aimed at presenting a strong leadership in the 1987 election, aspects of which were seen as presidential and personally centred on Kinnock.[1486] The question was not whether but "...how 'Presidential' should the campaign be...".[1487] A key feature of this presidentialism was the party political broadcast dubbed 'Kinnock – The Movie', with, very unusually, 'KINNOCK' rather than the Labour Party credited at the end.[1488] Again, it is questionable whether this advanced the party as much as its leader. Kinnock's personal poll rating shot up after the broadcast.[1489] Philip Gould acknowledged this as a "... key campaign goal ...".[1490] Yet, the party's own ratings did not show any similar rise.[1491]

The SCA publicly justified this course by citing research that indicated that Kinnock was "...a major asset for the party." [1492] However, as Gould later noted, Kinnock suffered poor personal poll ratings during his time as leader. And he privately indicated that the leader acted as a drag on his party.[1493] Yet an aspect of this presidential course, and an

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[1484] Leapman, Michael. 1987. *Kinnock*. London: Unwin Hyman.: 106, Shaw, *1945*: 174-5, Elliott, Gregory. 1993. *Labourism and the English genius : the strange death of Labour England?* London ; New York: Verso.: 137, Shaw, *1979*: 36, Hughes and Wintour: 10. The *Daily Mail* put it thus: "Only when there is blood on the stage – the blood of his own party – can we be sure that a Labour leader means business." However, the *Sun* however was not so positive. It said the speech indicated how divided the party was. (Both quoted in Leapman, *Kinnock*: 106).

[1485] Hewitt P. and Mandelson P. 'The Labour campaign' in Crewe and Harrop: 49, Shaw, *Discipline*: 259-90, Hughes and Wintour: 9-10, Leapman, *Kinnock*: 110. See also Miller, *How voters change*: 66-7.

[1486] Shaw, *1979*: 76-7, Wring, *Political marketing and the Labour Party*: 153-5, Franklin, *Packaging politics*: 138-9, Miller, *How voters change*: 130-1, Webb: 55-6, Elliott: 138, Hughes and Wintour: 25, Heffernan and Marqusee: 82, Philo, Political Advertising: 411.

[1487] SCA Meeting, October 16 1986, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives.

[1488] Franklin, *Packaging politics*: 138-9, Miller, *How voters change*: 130-1, Webb: 52-3, 56, Heffernan and Marqusee: 82-3, Hughes and Wintour: 26-7.

[1489] Franklin, *Packaging politics*: 138-9, Heffernan and Marqusee: 82-3, Hughes and Wintour: 26, Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 79, Leapman, *Kinnock*: 110.

[1490] Gould, P. *et. al.*, 'The Labour Party's campaign communications' in Crewe and Harrop: 86.

[1491] Shaw, *1979*: 77, Heffernan and Marqusee: 83.

[1492] Hewitt P. and Mandelson P. 'The Labour campaign' in Crewe and Harrop: 52, Shaw, *1979*: 76-7.

[1493] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 76, 77, 93, 144-5. See also Heffernan and Marqusee: 80, 104, McSmith, *Faces*: 12-3, Taylor Gerald, R. 1997. *Labour's renewal? : the policy review and beyond.* Basingstoke: Macmillan.: 111, Wilson, D. in 'Questions and Discussions' in Crewe, Ivor, and Brian Gosschalk. 1995. *Political communications : the general election campaign of 1992.* Cambridge [England] ; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press.: 266-7.

indication that the SCA sided with the leader rather than the party, was that Gould later accepted that strategists consciously withheld information concerning Kinnock's unpopularity.[1494] Gould defended this by suggesting he acted out of loyalty; it was not part of his job to undermine the leader.[1495] Yet, his loyalty was supposed to be to the party.

Importantly, the same centralising process saw the SCA become a new power base within the Labour Party, linked to the leader's office, but financed by the party. Although the NEC and, finally the Labour Party, was supposed to direct the SCA and the communications director, they had always operated as a more autonomous force linked to the leader. As Philip Gould makes clear, Labour's communication focus was developed without the knowledge or prior approval of the democratic structures of the party. The nascent SCA even operated in secret in the year before the NEC approved of it.[1496] Mandelson told Gould in 1985: "All the time in the Labour Party you are boxing with those people on the NEC – to whom ... we are all ultimately accountable...who do not know what we are doing, who, if they did would oppose it...".[1497] Meanwhile Mandelson himself promoted the leader, *de facto* as an adjunct of the leaders' office. As a party official in the early period, Sumner puts it: "Despite the fact that he was employed by the Labour Party, he saw his role as one of being Kinnock's spin doctor. He did not see himself as working for the party at all. Kinnock had people working for him. He had a reasonable amount of money. He should have been using that. I could never understand why this wasn't challenged more."[1498]

[1494] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 144-5. See also Hughes and Wintour: 9-10, Heffernan and Marqusee: 80, 104. An indication of this came when the SCA internally justified the presidential course. Evidence was presented pointing to Thatcher's unpopularity, yet polling on Kinnock's popularity was not produced. (Gould, P. 'Election Strategy Meeting', n.d., Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives).
[1495] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 144.
[1496] *Ibid.*: 56-7. As an anonymous letter put it, in March 1986: "Now that the Shadow Communications Agency has been approved by the National Executive Committee, we had better do something about getting it properly set up." (Anon., Letter, March 13 1986, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives).
[1497] Interview with Mandelson, November 9 1985 in Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 48.
[1498] Tricia Sumner interview, February 6 2002.

After the NEC ratified the SCA in March 1986, the SCA redefined Labour's priorities as the NEC's influence diminished. An early indication of this was that Mandelson and Gould led the SCA into redesigning the Labour Party's image for the 1986 conference, with approval for this achieved by deliberately underplaying its importance to the NEC. The two got it agreed by a NEC subcommittee with minimal discussion. Aiding the SCA's rise was Labour's new general secretary Larry Whitty who, according to Gould, backed Mandelson in "... quietly facilitating many of the changes Peter made".[1499]

This autonomy could even on occasion be from the leadership. Mandelson, on occasion, even before 1987, took decisions on presentation of campaigns and image that either challenged or contradicted those of the leader.[1500] More latterly, the communication officials' briefing process took a new form that was more ambiguous. They promoted particular favourites, such as Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. It is not clear whether the officials advanced the future stars because of their proximity to the leader or because they were close to Mandelson, operating independently of Kinnock.[1501]

Centralisation and the party: On-message, spin doctoring and counter-briefing

One aspect of this focus on the press and media and reinforcing the leadership was the idea of being 'on-message', which was combined with spin doctoring and counter-briefing.

The pressure from the predominantly Conservative press, and indeed newspaper executives and journalists, was to identify Labour debates in terms of splits. Thus, there was a pressure to conform to a particular form of discipline.[1502] This pressure fitted together neatly with the push for leadership centralisation. Getting the party to be 'on-

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[1499] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 66, 48.
[1500] *Ibid.*: 60-1, 64-5.
[1501] Gould, *Goodbye*: 226, Heffernan and Marqusee: 110, 223, Anderson and Mann: 365. In a secret memo to Kinnock, his chief of staff Charles Clarke confided that various members of the Shadow Cabinet, including Hattersley, John Smith and Cook, believed that Mandelson, Blair and Brown were even conspiring to use the press to prepare a new leadership after Kinnock. (Charles Clarke 'Communications and Press Matters', no date, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives).
[1502] Shaw, *1979*: 114.

message' achieved both aims. Being 'on-message' has entailed quelling activist voices, and even discordant speech of more senior members of the party, in order that the clear message from the leadership, as articulated by the SCA, should be the only one the press hears. So, for example, Mandelson indicated in 1985 that what was needed was for Labour to be able to repetitively 'ram home' one or two key points in each area, "...which is very hard when it comes to law and order and Bernie Grant [a deceased left MP] in one sentence eclipses everything that we have to say which is worthwhile...".[1503] Again, this has the added corollary that it enhanced Kinnock's ability to bring policy development under his control.[1504]

Associated with this, strategists concentrated on 'soundbites'. They considered that to get ideas across in the press and media, which relied on the short quoted summary of political positions, spokespeople needed to repeat simple slick phrases. A young shadow minister in Mandelson's coterie, the future leader Tony Blair, was a public advocate. In a newspaper article, he summarised the art: "Our news today is instant, hostile to subtlety or qualification. If you can't sum it up in a sentence, or even a phrase, forget it. Combine two ideas or sentiments together and mass communication will not repeat them. To avoid misinterpretation, strip down a policy or opinion to one key clear line before the media does it for you. Think in headlines."[1505] Again, using soundbites adapted Conservative thinking. The SCA had noted that the Tories had phrased ideas in ways that it was difficult to disagree and that some of Thatcher's 'pet phrases' had entered common parlance.[1506]

It may be sometimes true with political nostrums that if an argument cannot be summarised in a soundbite, it is the case that the argument is not entirely clear. However,

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[1503] Quoted in Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 47.
[1504] Shaw, *1979*: 113.
[1505] Tony Blair. 1987. 'A breakdown in communications', *Times*, November 24 1987. Also quoted in Rentoul: 191-2.
[1506] Leslie Butterfield, Roddy Glen and Paul Southgate, 'Towards a Communication Strategy for the Labour Party. An examination of attitudes amongst women aged 25-44', 1985, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives. For local campaigns, this strategy of constantly repeated soundbites was also emphasised. Local election campaigns would be organised from the top down with officials meeting the CLPs to organise the elections early on. Regular press releases for local campaigns were also encouraged. (Anon. 'Notes for Political Strategy Team', no date, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives).

the other side of this is a point Blair, perhaps ironically, starts to allude to in the same article already quoted. He notes that here is an effect on the "...quality of our democracy. The truth becomes almost impossible to communicate ...". The complexity of a political position becomes lost as it is shortened to a soundbite. This Blair, evasively, blamed on the media.[1507] But, of course, accepting the soundbite culture was a deliberate choice that Labour's new press and media strategy embraced. Another key effect of the soundbite culture on the Labour Party came about because of the way the SCA applied it. The SCA indicated that Labour's communications needed to use soundbites in order that ideas sounded positive rather than negative. So, "...against unemployment..." became "...for employment...". However, the SCA turned some of these negative phrases into positive ones in a way that was not value-free. This indicated how the use of soundbites affected policymaking. It was more than just 'spin'. Thus, strategists translated "...curb police powers..." as "...fight against crime..." and, in education, "...equal opportunities for all..." became "...improve educational standards...".[1508]

This soundbite culture was more associated with the SCA than the leadership in Kinnock's time.[1509] Unlike Blair, Kinnock never mastered the soundbite. This is clear when looking at the written drafts of his speeches. The verbal 'tricks' – the dense sub-clauses piled up on top of each other, the extensive repetition, the complex puns, the over-elaboration and the unnecessary sophistry – are all there on the page.[1510]

The concentration on the press and media also led to what has been regularly described as 'spin doctoring'. This is such a famous activity that it has been included in dictionaries and portrayed in Hollywood films and hardly needs describing.[1511] Philip Gould defines spin doctoring as the unexceptional activity of putting the view of the party to best

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[1507] Tony Blair, 'A breakdown in communications', *Times*, November 24 1987. Also cited in Rentoul: 192.
[1508] Butterfield et al.,
[1509] Even many of the SCA internal party discussion papers were written in headlines and soundbites. (Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives).
[1510] Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives.
[1511] The Chambers 21st Century Dictionary's definition of a spin doctor is "...someone, especially in politics, who tries to influence public opinion by putting a favourable bias on information presented to the public or to the media." Chambers 21st Century Dictionary online, chambersharrap.com. Also cited in Richards, Paul. 1998. *Be your own spin doctor : a practical guide to using the media*. Harrogate: Take That..

effect.[1512] Yet, it is more than this. However 'objective', much journalism entails the reporter providing an interpretation. As Gould and Mandelson's former deputy McSmith indicate, spinning also entails providing a perspective on what has happened.[1513] In the short time between when a political event happens and when it is reported, it is the job of the spin doctor to provide an understanding and framework for the events that he or she hopes will be adopted by the journalist.

In Labour's case, it has also indicated the importance of the press in agenda-setting, as one former party communications officer specifies. It has entailed both briefing after the event and providing an 'after-briefing service' to broadcasters who were told which newspaper stories were worth following up.[1514] This was particularly true in Kinnock's time, when communications officials targeted journalists on broadsheet newspapers that gave Labour more favourable coverage, in order to set the agenda for the broadcast news, as referred to earlier. [1515]

Labour's spin doctors also planted sympathetic stories with obliging press people, sometimes directly countering the reports in other press outlets. So, for instance, they instituted a damage limitation exercise with a story given to Andrew Grice at the *Sunday Times* about Kinnock's visit to America, following a previous disastrous trip. Replete with insider information about how Kinnock's spin doctors had carefully planned the outcome, the piece indicated that the tabloids had "...privately admitted defeat".[1516]

This same coterie of journalists around the communications director were used to discredit those who were seen as querying the leadership line, isolating those who were seen as discordant voices.[1517] Before 1987, Sumner identifies Norman Buchan as an example of someone briefed against. She told this work's author that she secretly

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[1512] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 334.
[1513] *Ibid.*: 333, McSmith, *Faces*: 250, Miller, *How voters change*: 71-2.
[1514] McSmith, *Faces*: 250, 253.
[1515] Shaw, *1979*: 62, Heffernan and Marqusee: 212.
[1516] Grice, Andrew. 1990. 'Kinnock wins tabloid game of hunt-the-gaffe' *Sunday Times*, July 22 1990. Heffernan and Marqusee identify Grice as one of those journalists with Mandelson's ear. (Heffernan and Marqusee: 219).
[1517] Shaw, *1979*: 113, Heffernan and Marqusee: 212 –219.

intervened to stop hostile material from Mandelson going to journalists when Buchan was sacked.[1518]

After the election defeat, a broader selection of the soft left was widely seen to having fallen victim to hostile briefings. These were said to include at various times John Prescott,[1519] Bryan Gould,[1520] Robin Cook[1521] and Michael Meacher.[1522] A secret internal party memo indicates how this operated with regard to Meacher. Press officer Colin Byrne indicated he had contradicted what Meacher had said on secondary picketing to the press "...under the guidance of the Leader's office".[1523]

The people and the media: party members and the revised strategy

The leadership's renewed emphasis on the press and media and the political marketing approach after 1987 strengthened its perception that grassroots members and activists were less important. As it again regarded the press and media as the forum to influence the wider public, so the significance of party members' capacity to communicate with the public and to transmit the public's views back to the leadership, through the party, became downgraded. This contributed to weakening their power within the party. Members would have little role and be relegated to being bystanders.[1524]

The SCA identified itself as public opinion's key interpreter through quantitative research – i.e. the use of opinion polls and qualitative research – such as the use of focus groups. This technique borrowed from marketing.[1525]

[1518] Tricia Sumner interview, February 6 2002.
[1519] McSmith, *Faces*: 75, Shaw, *1979*: 113, Anderson and Mann: 365, Hefferman and Marqusee: 110, 132, Gould, *Goodbye*: 217.
[1520] Gould, *Goodbye*: 224-31, Shaw, *1979*: 113, Anderson and Mann: 365, Hefferman and Marqusee: 110.
[1521] Anderson and Mann: 365, Gould, *Goodbye*: 217.
[1522] Shaw, *1979*: 113, Anderson and Mann: 365, Hefferman and Marqusee: 110, Gould, *Goodbye*: 217.
[1523] Colin Byrne, 'Letter to Larry Whitty', May 24 1991, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives.
[1524] Seyd and Whiteley: 174, 218. See also Shaw, *1979*: 191. In 1981, one Labour commentator had identified this trend in politics, writing: "What is, in effect ...political marketing has become a principal instrument of political power, displacing the apparent importance of ...party membership..." (Rustin, Michael. 1981. 'Different Conceptions of Party: Labour's Constitutional Debates' *New Left Review* 126 March-April 1981: 20).
[1525] Practitioners note that the employment of focus groups was a technique developed in United States. It was mainly associated with marketing from 1950s to 1980s. It was in part developed by two academics

As was indicated in the chapter, unlike Shaw, who sees the review as intensifying the pre-1987 project, Wring argues that there was a post-election shift from a media-led strategic approach to one based on political marketing. Prior to 1987, Labour's political communications had reverted to what he describes as a 'persuasional' schema, rather than the 'educational' school of thought that Foot had shared. The latter saw the role of campaigning to educate and evangelise for the Labour cause.[1526] Jennifer Lees-Marshment describes there being a sales-oriented approach.[1527]

By 1987, the Labour strategists already considered that electors had exogenously-fixed attitudes. Like consumers, they would pick and choose between party programmes on offer, rather than have their opinions shifted by a party project.[1528] As was indicated, after 1987, they developed a market-oriented approach, where it was seen that the product was designed to suit voters.[1529] The party hierarchy viewed the market research findings produced by the SCA as representative of the electorate and accorded them an important role in decision-making. Polls and focus groups shaped policy.[1530] Thus, a few months after the election, the SCA presented a survey *Labour and Britain in the 1990s*. In Philip Gould's words, this was "...a defining moment..." in the party's history.[1531] SCA members told a NEC and Shadow Cabinet joint meeting that electors had not voted for Labour because they saw it as old-fashioned and out-of-touch; a party of minorities and the poor. Policies on nationalisation, tax and industrial relations were still unpopular. The survey said that the party's greatest handicaps were extremism, disunity and the trade

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contributing to the US military effort by using focus groups to test propaganda for civilian consumption. The focus group technique has been used in a political context to identify the exact motives and reactions of a voter group. (Morgan David, L. 1998. *The focus group guide book*. Thousand Oaks, Calif. ; London: SAGE Publications.: 38, Halimi S. 'Spin Doctors Made in the USA' in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, August 1999).

[1526] Wring, Soundbites versus socialism: 59-68.

[1527] Lees-Marshment, Jennifer. 2001. 'The Marriage of Politics and Marketing', *Political Studies* 49, 692-713: 699.

[1528] Shaw, *1979*: 60, Dunleavy, Patrick. 1991. *Democracy, bureaucracy and public choice : economic explanations in political science*. New York ; London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.: 113, Panitch and Leys: 221, Callaghan, J. 2000. *The Retreat of Social Democracy*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

[1529] Lees-Marshment: 699.

[1530] Wring, *Political marketing and the Labour Party*: 183, 189, 190.

[1531] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 86. See also Shaw, *Wilderness*: 125.

unions. Yet, it suggested, if the party appealed to the upwardly mobile floating voters – and thus became more pro-market – this would be an election-winner.[1532]

This shift from sales to marketing is one employed in business marketing literature. It is associated with notion that market power has shifted from the seller to the buyer.[1533] It is one akin to the customer sovereignty argument in neo-liberal media theory.[1534] For Margaret Scammell, Labour after 1987 "...provides the clearest evidence so far..." of this shift. She uncritically accepts the strategists' characterisation of their own work: "Labour was responding rationally to changing voter concerns, and attempting to do so in a way that allowed it a distinctive competitive advantage in the electoral marketplace."[1535] For Scammell and Jennifer Marshment-Lees, reflecting the notion of New Labour insiders, one upshot of this is that politics has been democratised, as politics has responded to the wishes of the electorate.[1536]

Nevertheless, importantly, as Scammell later notes, the SCA's interpretation of these results was key.[1537] However, it is not clear that there was not a political agenda behind the research results provided to the party. It was striking that the *Labour and Britain in the 1990s*' pro-market interpretation accorded with the views of the SCA's two most prominent individuals, Gould and Mandelson, and the direction of the Labour leadership – at times contradicting quantitative polling.[1538] Gould himself made clear that he had a political agenda and that he suppressed results on Kinnock's popularity when they challenged his preset agenda, as we indicated. In addition, Labour latterly switched

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[1532] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 86-8, Mandelson, Peter, and Roger Liddle. 1996. *The Blair revolution : can new Labour deliver?* London: Faber and Faber.: 40, Hughes and Wintour: 61-3, Anderson and Mann: 19, Shaw, 1979: 81-4, Heffernan and Marqusee: 97-8.

[1533] Scammell, Margaret. 1999. 'Political Marketing: Lessons for Political Science', *Political Studies* 47:718-739.: 724-5..

[1534] Lees-Marshment: 695, 696.

[1535] Scammell: 733.

[1536] *Ibid.*: 738, Lees-Marshment: esp. 709.

[1537] Scammell: 735.

[1538] On tax, for instance, it contradicted quantitative polling that indicated that electors were prepared to pay more for better services. (Heath, A. and McMahon, D. 'Changes in values' in Jowell, Roger, Social, and Research Community Planning. 1992. *British social attitudes : the 9th report.* Aldershot, Hants: Dartmouth.: 118-9. See also Taylor-Gooby P., 'Comfortable, marginal and excluded' in Jowell, Roger, Social, and Research Community Planning. 1995. *British social attitudes : the 12th report.* Aldershot: Dartmouth [for] Social and Community Planning Research.: 3-4 and Social, and Research Community Planning. 1991. *British social attitudes cumulative sourcebook : the first six surveys.*: A-15).

opinion polling to a firm recently acquired by the 'modernising' ally of Gould, Clive Hollick.[1539]

None of these points necessarily invalidate the research, they merely make it open to question. They make the need for independent scrutiny more pressing. This was especially the case with its quantitative focus group research. There was no way to independently assess its interpretation, as the SCA, and the tightly-controlled milieu overseeing it, made sure its work was not open to public scrutiny.[1540] Yet, even focus group advocates have argued that it was only with such access that such research could be legitimated. They have also questioned whether information from the relatively small numbers involved in focus groups, such as those employed by the SCA, could be used to generalise to a wider grouping, such as an electorate.[1541] Thus, controversial research gleaned from a market method of policy creation had come up with a pro-market solution to Labour's electoral woes.

Moreover, the Labour leadership partly predicated its political marketing strategy on the assumption that activists were unrepresentative of the public, or even Labour voters. Thus, the idea developed that grassroots campaigning should be foregone in favour of press and media work. While after 1987, as we have seen, it was assumed that marketing techniques would effectively monitor the electorate's opinions. This view of the unrepresentative activist is shared by a number of commentators, including some from the left.[1542]

However, social attitudes research on this is more ambiguous than is sometimes thought. For instance, importantly for this whole work, both voters and Labour members

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[1539] Wring, *Political marketing and the Labour Party*: 193, DCMS Press Release. 2002. *Lord Hollick to be new Chairman of the South Bank Board*, 18 February 2002.
[1540] Shaw, *1979*: 64,148, Anderson and Mann: 367.
[1541] Krueger, Richard A. 1998. *Analyzing & reporting focus group results*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications.: 11, 34-38, Krueger, Richard A. 1994. *Focus groups : a practical guide for applied research*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications., Morgan David, L. 1998. *The focus group guide book*. Thousand Oaks, Calif. ; London: SAGE Publications.: 62.
[1542] See, for instance, Cliff, Tony, and Donny Gluckstein. 1988. *The Labour Party : a Marxist history*. London: Bookmarks.: 349-55 and Crouch C. 1999 'The Parabola of Working-Class Politics', in Gamble, Andrew, and Anthony Wright. 1999. *The new social democracy*. Oxford ; Malden, MA: Blackwell.: 79.

supported industrial democracy at this time – a cause, of course, central to activist demands on press participatory democracy.[1543] Yet, the leadership discarded this even before the Policy Review itself, as we have seen. The most extensive survey of the relationship between the beliefs of party members and voters, by two professors, Patrick Seyd and Paul Whiteley, indicates that on some salient domestic issues, activists, Labour voters and the electorate as a whole shared many similar positions in this period. These included increasing spending on eradicating poverty and on the NHS, their policy towards troops in Ireland and on private medicine. On another, public spending, although there was a divergence, this indicated an inconsistency in voter views.[1544] Like the activists, three-quarters of the adult population supported progressive taxation in the years 1985 to 1990 and two-thirds of respondents believed it was the responsibility of government to reduce income difference.[1545] And a poll carried out for the party in 1990 showed that three-quarters of people would support a party investing in industry, hospital and education, even if it meant paying more tax.[1546]

Thus, the leadership assumption that a justification for the switch to press and media work from activist campaigning, because of the complete divergence between the activists and the electorate, is not entirely borne out by the evidence. Although there were significant areas of divergence, important areas showed similarities.[1547] Any idea that the

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[1543] Social, and Research Community Planning. 1991. *British social attitudes cumulative sourcebook : the first six surveys.*: A-32, Seyd and Whiteley: 54.
[1544] Seyd and Whiteley: 212-6
[1545] Edlund, J., 'Progressive taxation farewell' in Taylor-Gooby, Peter, and Stefan Svallfors. 1999. *The end of the welfare state? : responses to state retrenchment.* New York: Routledge.: 116.
[1546] NOP Poll, November 21 1990, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives.
[1547] Areas of divergence between the activists and the voters included the three key areas identified where the Policy Review shifted the party's position – on union law and renationalisation and unilateral disarmament. But even on the last of these there was some ambiguity. With unions, voters were indeed in favour of tightening legislation while Labour activists were not. (Seyd and Whiteley: 212-6). As for renationalisation, a majority of party members wished for more public ownership, while survey evidence shows that voters wanted the status quo to remain and more take-overs would be unpopular. (Seyd and Whiteley: 54, Social, and Research Community Planning. 1991. *British social attitudes cumulative sourcebook : the first six surveys.*: H-1). On unilateralism, there was an overwhelming demand by voters for the retention of weapons until other countries reduced them, unlike the activists. (Heath, A. and McMahon, D. 'Changes in values' in Jowell, Roger, Social, and Research Community Planning. 1992. *British social attitudes : the 9th report.* Aldershot, Hants: Dartmouth.: 118-9). Yet, like Labour members, a majority also saw the installation of American nuclear missiles as making Britain less safe. (Young K., 'Living under threat' in Jowell, Roger, Sharon Witherspoon, Lindsay Brook, Social, and Research Community Planning. 1990. *British social attitudes : the 7th report.* Aldershot, England: Gower.: 95).

electorate shared the Conservative tabloids' prescription of a low tax, non-interventionist economic policy is not borne out by the evidence.

Even members of the leader's office became concerned that damage had been caused as Labour substituted press and media work for activist election campaigning. In 1991, Neil Stewart, a Kinnock aide and a link between the leaders' office and the SCA, outlined his fears in a secret briefing. He expressed concerns that: "...in some by elections our press work was the campaign and in reality little else was delivered to a high level". Stewart believed that this overemphasis provided "...a sharp reminder that the spoken word or personal contact remains the most powerful and appreciated forms of communications ... and that getting people in to carry the message..." was as important as press and media campaigning.[1548] Yet, according to Labour's general secretary, in an internal assessment of the 1992 campaign, much of the spending went into the Millbank press centre.[1549]

Research has seemed to back up these fears. Seyd and Whitely regard the SCA conception of campaigning as having been dominant because little analysis has been done of the effect on voting of the actions of local parties.[1550] Their research, comparing the 1983 and 1987 election, challenges this view and shows a large active campaigning membership as key to improved electoral performance. The highly active Labour constituencies showed the larger swing. In fact, from their calculations, the researchers tentatively estimate that if Labour had doubled its membership, then it would have won the 1987 election.[1551] Thus, they indicate, the emphasis on a centralised press and media campaign is "... far too one-sided ...".[1552]

[1548] Neil Stewart, 'Briefing Note; By Election Organisation, April 1991', Neil Kinnock personal archive Churchill Archives.
[1549] Larry Whitty, 'The General Election 1992', June 21 1992: 50, Neil Kinnock's personal papers, Churchill Archives.
[1550] Seyd and Whiteley: 175.
[1551] *Ibid.*: 186-198. See also Shaw, *1979*: 191.
[1552] *Ibid.*: 199, 207. See also Taylor, *Labour's renewal?*: 194-5.

The SCA after 1987: Power Increases

In the period after 1987, leading up to 1992, as the commitment to newspaper ownership intervention waned, so the SCA became more sophisticated in their dealings with the press. They improved their presentation to broadcasters and became more forceful in news management, for example by intervening to structure programmes. They also developed new techniques in agenda-setting with regard to newspapers. For instance, they supplied newsworthy copy and photo-opportunities on what they regarded as Labour issues.[1553]

As we have noted, Wring indicates that the marketing approach led to the leadership's influence increasing.[1554] And with this, the SCA's power also increased. As we saw, the SCA was central to Labour's policy adaptation after the 1987 defeat, conducted primarily through the Policy Review. Often, this influence was at the expense of the PLP and even the Shadow Cabinet. This was because, along with the SCA's role in interpreting opinion research, there was a concern to provide policies that would go down well in the press and media. An indication of this was how the broadsheet newspapers promoted the review findings.[1555]

The SCA and Hewitt, from the leaders' office, were involved in rewriting and drafting parts of the Policy Review's reports.[1556] While Philip Gould underplays this point of the SCA's influence, he still suggests that it helped shape policy on defence. And the leader of the party he reported to was much more forthright in applauding the SCA's influence. Kinnock later noted that it gave "...presentations which emphasised Labour's strengths and weaknesses and assisted in the efforts to sustain the review in the desired direction. I would not impugn Philip Gould's integrity by saying that more emphasis was put on

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[1553] Franklin, *Packaging politics*: 144, Tait, R. 'The parties and television' in Crewe and Gosschalk: 62, Shaw, *1979*: 127, 128.
[1554] Wring, *Political marketing and the Labour Party*: 183.
[1555] Hefferman and Marqusee: 221, See also Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 98, Anderson and Mann: 387.
[1556] Hughes and Wintour: 166-175, Shaw, *1979*: 112. See also Taylor, *Labour's renewal?*: 57-8, 103.

some things rather than others, but I saw to it that meetings were conducted in such a way as to make the people remember the weaknesses far longer than they remembered the strengths."[1557]

The SCA's power culminated at the time of the 1992 election. The SCA and Philip Gould, together with Hewitt, who had left the leaders' office for the Institute of Public Policy Research, but was still closely linked, effectively ran the 1992 campaign.[1558] (Mandelson had by now left his post in order to become an MP, to be replaced first by John Underwood and then David Hill).[1559] Separation between the campaigning and the policies advocated in the campaign was wafer-thin. An example of this was the concentration on proportional representation as an issue towards the end of the campaign, which emanated from Hewitt.[1560]

According to Philip Gould, the campaign was run in secret. The formal group, which oversaw the SCA, the Campaign Management Team, had been superseded in the period leading up to the election by a secret group, which included two members of Kinnock's office and Hewitt, the director of communications and Whitty. The SCA worked in tandem with this.[1561] The SCA, thus, wielded great power along with the leaders' office. Although Shadow Cabinet member Jack Cunningham, as campaign co-ordinator, was a member of the secret group, according to Gould "...senior politicians were never fully involved...".[1562] An indication of this was that deputy leader Hattersley says that he had no involvement even in planning *his own* election programme.[1563] Unaccountable outsiders were also influential, such as the media entrepreneur Clive Hollick, who would

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[1557] Kinnock, N. (1994) 'Reforming the Labour Party', *Contemporary Record*, 8 (3), pp. 535-54, 544. Also cited in Panitch and Leys: 320.
[1558] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 108-10.
[1559] *Ibid.*: 101-14, Heffernan and Marqusee: 227-9, 231.
[1560] However, how important it became seems to have been a case more of accident than design. (Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 150-1).
[1561] This was a criticism made by the soft left after the 1992 election. In his memoirs, Gould admits this to be the case. Hattersley's view by 1991 was that the politicians were not controlling campaigning. (Roy Hatersley 'Letter to Neil Kinnock April 8 1991, Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 108-10. See also Shaw, *1979*: 146-8).
[1562] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 109. See also Heffernan and Marqusee: 315.
[1563] Hattersley, *Who goes home?*: 305.

later become a press businessman.[1564] Examples of the problems with the SCA's domination included the debacle over a broadcast dubbed 'the war of Jennifer's Ear' and the self-congratulatory election-eve Sheffield Rally.[1565]

Yet, it is important to note that the SCA were by no means all-powerful in policy development by 1992. The leaders' office was centrally involved in the campaign, as we have seen. The manifesto, also, had been drawn up by the leader's office and was merely ratified by the Clause V discussion of the NEC and Shadow Cabinet. The involvement of Hewitt in this is frankly described by deputy leader Hattersley as that of "...the leadership's hatchet person who rewrote the manifesto to reflect the fears of the Shadow Cabinet rather than the hopes of the rank and file".[1566] Also, old right-wingers, such as John Smith, challenged the SCA. He intransigently refused to follow its demands on tax in 1992.[1567]

In contrast, the NEC's influence had waned. But this was not predetermined. To a sizeable extent, it was because a majority of its members had chosen not to challenge the shifts in policy and the changes in the power over policymaking.

Indeed, the NEC involved itself in a particular shift in the influence of the party's communications officers. This indicated that the NEC still had the potential to influence events, even if it did not always exercise this. After Mandelson made clear that he was leaving, the NEC appointed Underwood in 1989. Those on the left had made clear their disquiet at the stream of hostile briefings provided by unelected party officers.[1568] After the NEC's selection, there was some shift. Underwood wanted to be impartial in his dealings with the Shadow Cabinet and to promote a wider selection of senior politicians

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[1564] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 109, David Blunkett, 'Letter to NEC members', June 16 1992, 'Letter to Lary Whitty' 28 March 1992, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives.
[1565] Cook, R., 'The Labour campaign' in Crewe and Gosschalk: 15, Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 130-41. See also Shaw, *1979*: 141, Franklin, *Packaging politics*: 139, Heffernan and Marqusee: 310-1,Gould, *Goodbye*: 250, Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 148.
[1566] Hattersley, *Who goes home?*: 222, Heffernan and Marqusee: 307. See also Shaw, *1979*: 215.
[1567] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 117-30, Shaw, *Wilderness*: 127.
[1568] For instance, Benn had indicated his disquiet at a NEC Communications Committee meeting (Labour Party NEC, NEC Minutes, September 27 1989).

than just those who were associated with Kinnock and Mandelson.[1569] However, he resigned within a year of taking full control after failing to gain Kinnock's support in a battle with Underwood's deputy Colin Byrne. He felt that Byrne, along with the SCA, had undermined him.[1570]

As a most perceptive chronicler of this period, Eric Shaw paints a picture of the rise of the influence of the SCA, particularly during the Policy Review, as related to the weakening hold of the soft left. He views that the Bennite left "...was hardly engaged at all".[1571] While this is true, it downplays the fact that the Bennite left saw the NEC as the policymaking body and so challenged the policy drift and the SCA domination there. As for that body, the private briefings from the leaders' office to Kinnock in his archives considering the NEC, showed as much concern about motions coming from the Bennite left as from the soft left.[1572]

[1569] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 106, McSmith, *Faces*: 265-6, Franklin, *Packaging politics*: 133.
[1570] John Underwood, 'Letter to Larry Whitty', June 5 1991, Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 105-7.
[1571] See, for instance, Shaw, *Wilderness*: 126-7.
[1572] Examples include the notes for the NEC on September 27 and October 25 1989, Neil Kinnock personal archive, Churchill Archives. Benn notes that he and Dennis Skinner moved 48 different amendments to the five review sections presented to the NEC in May 1990, for instance. (Benn, *The end of an era*: 590-1). An example of when he challenged the role of the communications officers is noted in the minutes for the NEC of September 27 1989 (Labour Party NEC, NEC Minutes of September 27 1989.).

How effective was this new strategy on influencing the newspapers and the newspapers on the strategy?

In the both the 1987 election and 1992 elections, despite the work to shift the press by the new press and media strategy, the press still displayed a huge bias against the Labour Party.

In 1987, the daily tabloids' partiality was "...so obvious, so blatant ...", with the obvious exception of the Labour-loyal *Daily Mirror*. Overall, among the press, in terms of circulation, 67% of the national press, that is 12 daily and Sunday titles, backed the Conservatives and five supported Labour. Of these, three were part of the *Mirror* stable, one was the *News on Sunday* and the other was the *Guardian.*[1573] There has also been research that points to the agenda-setting effect which the Conservative press had on broadcasters, which the press and media coverage was supposed to influence. [1574]

Despite the SCA's efforts, the party was defeated at the polls in both elections. A number of observers saw the 1987 campaign as a success, despite this failure. This was because the effective campaign, despite the party's poor position at the start of it, enabled Labour to beat the Alliance.[1575] While being a failure regarding policy and personalities, "...it was a public relations triumph".[1576] However, to see it in these public relations terms would be to regard it, as McSmith puts it, like one of those advertising campaigns that wins awards but fails to sell the product, "... as if *in video veritas*".[1577] Poll levels changed little from before the start of the election campaign. Research indicates that the attempts at agenda setting had little influence on voters and respondents mainly voted for

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[1573] MacArthur, B. 'The national press' in Crewe and Harrop: 96-7, British Politics, Newspaper Endorsements 1964-97, www.ukpol.co.uk. See also Negrine: 172-3.
[1574] Negrine: 178, MacArthur, B. 'The national press' in Crewe and Harrop: 97, McKie, Fact is free: 124.
[1575] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 74, 80, Webb: 56-7, Hewitt P. and Mandelson P. 'The Labour campaign' in Crewe and Harrop: 50,53, Miller *et. al.*, 'Political change in Britain during the 1987 campaign', in Crewe and Harrop: 109. See also Shaw, *1979*: 79.
[1576] Hattersley, *Who goes home?*: 293. See also Franklin, *Packaging politics*: 133.
[1577] McSmith, *Faces*: 249, Elliott: 171.

the party they identified with at the start.[1578] Labour failed to cut into the Conservatives' share of the vote, which very slightly increased.[1579]

Equally, as we saw earlier, the SCA-led approach did not quell press hostility to Labour in 1992. Kinnock highlighted this concern in his attack on the Conservative newspapers after the election. Former Conservative party treasurer Lord McAlpine dubbed the tabloid editors the campaign's 'heroes', appearing to back up Kinnock's claims on his resignation with regard to press bias.[1580] As it was, Labour could only rely on national dailies with less than 30% of the circulation.[1581] However, an important pointer for how Labour's relationship with the press would map out was that the *Sun*, was "...not so much pro-Tory as anti-Labour...", while some of the tabloids did not formally back the Conservatives.[1582] As was seen, the vitriolic hostility against Labour, was, nevertheless, evident, particularly in the final days of the campaign. Labour's general secretary, in a confidential assessment, later viewed that the newspapers simply ignored the SCA's efforts.[1583]

In contrast to Labour influencing the press, there has been much discussion as to whether the *press influenced Labour*, particularly with regard to the attacks on Militant and the reaction to the spate of tabloid stories pillorying the 'loony left'. There is evidence that

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[1578] Miller, *How voters change*, Miller *et. al.*, 'Political change in Britain during the 1987 campaign', in Crewe and Harrop: 111,113.
[1579] Panitch and Leys: 222. Gould, P. *et. al.*, 'The Labour Party's campaign communications' in Crewe and Harrop: 74, 86, Negrine: 157-8.
[1580] Labour's general secretary Whitty even accused newspapers as having attempted to disrupt the party's campaign to "...a degree which is probably unprecedented and must have cost millions of pounds."(Larry Whitty, 'The General Election 1992', June 21 1992: 53, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives). For references to Kinnock and McAlpine, see McKie, D. ''Fact is free but comment is sacred'; Or was it The Sun wot won it?' in Crewe and Gosschalk: 121-135, Chippindale, Peter, and Chris Horrie. 1999. *Stick it up your punter! : the uncut story of the Sun newspaper*. London: Simon & Schuster.: 434, Franklin, *Packaging politics*: 220-1, Berry S. 'Party strategy and the media - the failure of Labour's 1992 election campaign' *Parliamentary Affairs*, Oct 1992, Vol.45, No.4: 565-6, Negrine: 177.
[1581] Nossiter T., Scammell M. and Semetko, H. 'Old values versus news values: The British 1992 General Election campaign on television' in Crewe and Gosschalk: 86, Negrine: 177. See also Franklin, *Packaging politics*: 215.
[1582] Chippindale and Horrie, *Stick it*: 432, McKie, Fact is free: 121-135.
[1583] Larry Whitty, 'The General Election 1992', June 21 1992: 50, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives.

strategists attempted to "...recast the Party in the image preferred by the media...".[1584] As the soft left employment secretary Michael Meacher considered, the most important effect of the "...relentless pressure..." of the press was on those creating party policy: "Can the policy makers in the Labour Party read wall-to-wall criticism of established Labour policies and traditions without being affected? I don't believe they can," he told the CPBF in 1989.[1585]

The SCA did indeed accept the premise that the press advocated in the mid-1980s. They considered there *was* a 'loony left', typically associated with the municipal socialists. This 'loony left', through advocating policies to end discrimination against women, black people, lesbians and gays and disabled people was seen by both the newspapers and the SCA to be hampering the Labour Party. Thus, strategists influenced the image and the policies of the party in an attempt distance it from this tag. So, for instance, one member of the SCA referred in a memo just after the election to the "...loony left..." (which he did not describe in quote marks), as one of Labour's "...electoral skeletons..." which had been neutralised.[1586] Philip Gould himself viewed that Labour had to distance itself from the GLC, which he also saw as "...loony left...".[1587] That others close to the SCA also accepted this premise soon became public knowledge, when a memo from Kinnock's press secretary Patricia Hewitt was leaked, indicating that she accepted the existence of a 'London effect'.[1588]

One reflection of this press assault on the 'loony left' in local government was the communications-led approach's failure to capitalise on the party's potential over the community charge. The poll tax, as it was known, had been a key component in the downfall of Mrs Thatcher, with demonstrations across 'Middle England' attesting to its unpopularity. *Even after Major came into office with talk of reform*, Labour's internal

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[1584] Heffernan and Marqusee: 206, Negrine: 9-10, 160, citing Curran, James, Anthony Smith, Pauline Wingate, and Trust Acton Society. 1987. *Impacts and influences : essays on media power in the twentieth century*. London ; New York: Methuen., Heffer: 61, 74, Panitch and Leys: 217,
[1585] Meacher, Michael. 1989. 'The Labour Party and the Media', *Free Press* 55, October 1989.
[1586] Ed Straw, 'Opposition into Government – A Strategic Framework', 26 June 1987, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives.
[1587] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 71.
[1588] Memo from Patricia Hewitt, February 26 1987. Also cited in Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 71.

polling showed that the poll tax was seen as the second most important problem for government, after improving the NHS. It was also the second most positive consideration about Labour that it was going to change the tax.[1589] Yet, the priorities that were seen to flow from this sort of information did not include campaigning on the community charge.[1590]

Instead, it was seen as a negative. There were disagreements about what to replace it with, but what was seen as an important problem was that campaigning would have associated the party with the significant movement against non-payment.[1591] Despite recognising early on that the tax was deeply unpopular and seen as unfair, members of the SCA viewed that non-payment could be associated with tax evasion.[1592] 'Senior Labour figures' told journalists that non-payment threatened to "...dispel the moderate new image ..." which had led to by-election success.[1593] Part of this defensive strategy was that a member of the leaders' office was despatched to identify the non-paying MPs.[1594] Labour was not threatened with becoming part of a non-payment campaign. Yet, rather than have *any* association with such a campaign and thus possibly face being tarred with a 'loony left' brush by the press, the SCA judged that it was better to forego campaigning on an issue which polls indicated was electorally popular.

[1589] The NOP poll indicated that 64% of the respondents believed this. (NOP Poll, 21 November 1990, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives).
[1590] SCA, 'Summary of Polling, Post Major National NOP Poll', no date, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives.
[1591] An indication of the disagreements is provided by the leaders' office in private notes to Kinnock. (Leader's Office, 'Notes to Neil Kinnock for the National Executive Committee', January 24 1990, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives).
[1592] Christopher Riley, 'Labour Party Advertising: Notes on Two Group Discussions', November 1987: 13-6, Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives.
[1593] This is what 'senior Labour figures' had made clear to a sympathetic journalist. (Smith, David and Andrew Grice. 1990. 'Tories scorn Major's poll tax concession', *Sunday Times*, 25 March 1990).
[1594] Neil Kinnock personal papers, Churchill Archives.

Appendix 2 to Chapter 6: The Right of Reply

The upsurge of militancy surrounding the miners' strike saw some of the last successful attempts at gaining an industrial right of reply.[1595] However, in 1984, the TUC for the first time clearly identified that the right of reply should be a legal requirement.[1596] A series of concerned Labour Party MPs took this up in the House of Commons, taking as their cue a commitment to such a measure in the 1983 manifesto.[1597] Supported by the Labour leadership and the CPBF, Max Madden first took up the baton, followed by Austin Mitchell in 1984, Ann Clwyd in 1987 and Tony Worthington in 1989.[1598]

In the course of these attempts, although the principle remained of public participation in challenging centralised editorial control, this issue was somewhat obscured as other themes were also introduced. By the time Mitchell introduced a Bill, the question was as much about standards as inaccuracy and bias. This was also a feature of Labour frontbench support for the Worthington Bill. Returning to an earlier theme, popularisation of the press was denounced as sensationalisation and trivialisation.[1599] Rather than challenging the strict libel laws, used by figures such as Maxwell in order to suppress investigation of his actions, Clwyd's Bill wished to extend them so that there

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[1595] Jones, David, Press Campaign for, and Freedom Broadcasting. 1986. *Media hits the pits : the media and the coal dispute*. London: Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom.
[1596] Richardson, Alan. 1984. 'Make it Legal', *Free Press* 25 September/October 1984.
[1597] Labour, Party. 1983. *The new hope for Britain : Labour's manifesto 1983*. London: Labour Party..
[1598] Allaun, Frank. 1984. 'Right of reply marches on', *Free Press* 22, January/February 1984. Allaun, Frank. 1988. *Spreading the news : a guide to media reform*. Nottingham: Spokesman.: 91-2. See also Baistow T., 'A notice-board for the faithful' in CPBF, *Labour daily?*: 8. HOC 3 February 1989, col. 546-609, HOC 21 April 1989, col. 605-623, Tunstall, J. 1995. *Newspaper power : the new national press in Britain*. Oxford New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press.: 399. The former BBC employee and *Guardian* journalist Ann Clwyd became an MP in 1984. She had been a member of the 1972-1974 Labour Party study group on the media. From 1987 until 1995, she was, variously, Labour's spokesperson on women, education, overseas development, Wales, media and national heritage, employment and foreign affairs. She was a member of the Shadow Cabinet from 1989-1993. (2001. *Who's who : an annual biographical dictionary*. London: A & C Black.: 411). Former lecturer Tony Worthington was elected an MP in 1987. He has been a Labour spokesman for oversees development foreign affairs, Northern Ireland. From 1997 to 1998, he was a minister in the Northern Ireland office. (2000. *Dod's parliamentary companion 2001 : 168th year*. London: Vacher Dod.: 331, 2002. *Who's who 2002 : an annual biographical dictionary*. London: A. & C. Black.: 2352-3).
[1599] HOC 21 April 1989, col. 614, White, Aidan. 1984. 'MP in bid for right of reply law', *Free Press* 24 July/August 1984.

would be legal aid for those wanting to sue for libel.[1600] Worthington also supported such an approach. [1601]

The Labour Party was again divided over the problem of which body would oversee such a right of reply. Clwyd advocated a more democratic alternative to a court procedure. She argued for a Media Complaints Commission. Under proposals drawn up by the CPBF, it would be an independent body funded from the public purse, with a membership drawn from "...as broad and representative a sample of the population as possible".[1602] However, by the time of the debate over Worthington's Bill, this procedure had been rejected for less democratic alternatives.

Worthington advocated that the Press Commission oversaw replies and, acting as a tribunal, would adjudicate on complaints.[1603] It was planned that the commission would be responsible to the Home Secretary and the House of Commons. Rather than any direct democratic mandate, the Home Secretary would appoint its members.[1604] In the debate on the Bill, however, the Labour frontbench advocated a different approach. Mark Fisher was concerned that the Press Commission would be government-appointed. This was because of his unease over how the Thatcher government had made such appointments and patronage generally. Nevertheless, rather than embracing broadening the franchise for such posts, he denounced such procedures as "...cumbersomely democratic...".[1605] Fisher's answer was that the integrated ministry for arts and the media would oversee the right of reply. It is not clear, however, how this would answer the problem of government interference.

[1600] Allaun, *Spreading the news*: 91-2., Tom Baistow,' The Predator's Press' in Buchan, Norman, and Tricia Sumner. 1989. *Glasnost in Britain? : against censorship and in defence of the word.* London: Macmillan.: 68, Anon. 1987. 'Stop Press', *Free Press* 43, October 1987, Anon. 1988. 'Tories talk out Right of Reply', *Free Press* 45, February 1988, Trades Union Congress. Annual, Conference. 1988. *Report of the 120th annual Trades Union Congress.* London: T.U.C..

[1601] HOC 3 February 1989, col. 546, 579.

[1602] Anon.1987. 'Right of reply could be law', *Free Press* 44, December 1987.

[1603] HOC 3 February 1989, col. 554.

[1604] HOC 21 April 1989, col. 605-6.

[1605] HOC for 3 February 1989, col. 601, HOC 21 April 1989, col.622-3.

So, as Labour rejected direct democratic involvement in press decisions, the only method for any participation was through the right of reply. Yet, by the end of this period, the body to oversee the opportunity for such a right was still being debated. It would either be through the Press Commission responsible to the government or through the government itself. Although more democratic than being in the gift of the editor or proprietor alone, neither avoided the problem of state interference.

Most importantly, though, the right of reply commitment did not make its way into the 1992 manifesto. This was despite the fact that no party forum had explicitly rejected it. However, it would not be the last that would be heard of it.

Appendix 3 to Chapter 6: The municipal left and the cultural industries

At the same time that, nationally, Labour politics was shifting to the right, another form of municipal socialism from that of Militant had developed at a local level. The upsurge of demands from the women's movement, the black community, lesbian and gay people and the disabled for equality, as a democratic requirement, influenced this. At its most distinctive, the municipal politics reflected the New Left's willingness to reconsider the relationship between local democracy, public participation and economic planning.

Most notably associated with London's GLC, from 1981, Labour councils across the country had pursued radical policy priorities in areas including economic development and employment provision. These would affect press policies.[1606] The same Keynesian crisis which opened the ground for the whole party to make a short-term shift to the left nationally, as we saw in the last chapter, led to a slightly more prolonged left-wing move in local government – as socialists questioned the old social democratic certainties.

There may not have been any identifiable municipal socialist programme.[1607] Yet, like other left-leaning forces we explored in the previous chapter, the majority of its adherents shared a democratic scepticism about, on the one side, the existing state's effectiveness and 1970s-style Labour corporatism, and, on the other, the right's belief in the market.[1608] They attempted to challenge the Government's strategy of rolling back the state. But they

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[1606] It was developed also in other areas including Manchester and Sheffield, as well as some London boroughs. In Liverpool, as well, another form of left leadership, which included Militant supporters, enacted a programme which successfully fought homelessness, but without wider public participation. (Wainwright, Hilary. 1987. *Labour : a tale of two parties*. London: Hogarth.: 127-36). The Government had stripped the flagship GLC of many of its former powers, such as housing and transport, in 1983. This left the municipal socialist councils to justify themselves through their grant-making function, in which job creation was a key part. (Sheldrake, John. 1989. *Municipal socialism*. Avebury, Aldershot: Avebury.: 56-7).

[1607] See Cochrane, Allan. 1993. *Whatever happened to local government?* Buckingham: Open University Press.: 29, 40-1, 42.

[1608] Wainwright, *Labour*: 95-6, Cochrane: 43, Chandler, J. A. 1991. *Local government today*. Manchester, Manchester U P, 1991.: Manchester University Press.: 242. Some leading advocates developed what we can now see as a forerunner of New Labour's 'communitarian' thrust in this state scepticism. (Blunkett, David, and Keith Jackson. 1987. *Democracy in crisis : the town halls respond*. London: Hogarth Press.: 214, cited in Chandler: 242).

showed some commitment to wider participation in decision-making and popular democratic involvement. As a leading proponent David Blunkett put it, they wanted to enable people to "...run their own affairs..." – at least in theory.[1609] The extent of this commitment was mixed, even with the GLC.[1610] However, the GLC consciously attempted to increase democratic participation within the organisations to be financed, by encouraging co-operatives.

Cultural Industries

The municipal socialists' democratising initiatives, inadequately indicated by the *News on Sunday*, was related to the 'cultural industries' approach. Two leading proponents, Ken Worpole and Geoff Mulgan, helped the conception enter mainstream Labour Party thought.[1611] They had worked at the GLC Community Arts Sub-Committee and then at the GLEB Cultural Industries Unit.[1612]

To a degree, this cultural industries approach represented a policy transfer from both investment strategies pursued by the French government and Northern Italian

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[1609] Blunkett and Jackson: 5, quoted in Cochrane: 43. See also Wainwright, *Labour*: esp. 95-126, Gyford, John, and Mari James. 1983. *National parties and local politics*. London ; Boston: G. Allen & Unwin.: 191-2. David Blunkett was a politics and industrial relations tutor and was leader of Sheffield City Council from 1980 to 1987, when he became an MP. He was a member of the NEC from 1983 to 1998. Blunkett was Labour spokesperson on health, education and employment. He was Minister for Education and Employment from 1997-2001 and has since been Home Secretary. (Dod's parliamentary companion 2001 : 168th year. London: Vacher Dod.: 97, 2002. Who's who 2002 : an annual biographical dictionary. London: A. & C. Black.: 205-6).

[1610] Hilary Wainwright convincingly looks to the diverse local lefts' historical development to explain this variation. It manifested itself in two ways. Some council structures were opened up to wider participation. The GLC's Women's Committee and some Manchester initiatives notably employed direct democracy. There was also some direct participation in the GLC's Industry and Employment Committee. Unions were consulted and some community groups were involved. Of particular note was the job creation strategy enacted by the Greater London Enterprise Board (GLEB), with smaller similar initiatives by other councils. (Wainwright, *Labour*: 95-126).

[1611] Geoff Mulgan worked for the GLEB before returning to academia and becoming a lecturer. He was special adviser to Gordon Brown from 1990-2. He was co-founder and director of the think-tank Demos from 1993-1999 and member of the Prime Minister's policy unit from 1997-2000. Since 2000, he has been Director of the Performance and Innovation Unit at the Cabinet Office. 2001. *Who's who : an annual biographical dictionary*. London: A & C Black.: 1493.

[1612] Mulgan, Geoff, Ken Worpole, and Group Comedia Publishing. 1986. *Saturday night or Sunday morning? : from arts to industry : new forms of cultural policy*. London ; Littlehampton, W. Sussex: Comedia Pub. Group : Distributed in the UK by G. Philips.: 13.

administrations linked to the Italian Communist Party.[1613] These ideas had been imported to Britain by the fertile minds of those involved with *Marxism Today* in Britain, who gave a positive appraisal of the market's role.

There were two aspects to this approach. Firstly, the traditional social market position was to intervene to correct market failure. One difference with the cultural industries approach was what its advocates considered as the market's deficiencies. They were not only interested in dealing with deficits in diversity. Replicating other policies, they were also concerned with the market's failure to provide sufficient investment for the media industries to compete.[1614] The GLC theorists considered that bolstering the cultural industries would provide a potential engine of economic success.[1615] Thus, the traditional left conception of economic activity had been turned on its head. The superstructure had become the motor for the base.[1616]

Again replicating broader notions, cultural industry advocates saw a greater role for the market to articulate the public's views. Market inadequacies in providing diversity did not lead to the market's replacement per se. Instead, they considered that state provision's problem was its *insulation from the market*, which made it unable to react to changes in public tastes and attitudes.[1617] Thus, instead of answering the problems of top-down public involvement in the media by democratising access and provision and encouraging

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[1613] Garnham, Nick and Epstein, Joyce. 1985. 'Cultural Industries, Consumption and Policy', in *The state of the art or the art of the state?: Strategies for the cultural industries in London*, edited by Department for Recreation and the Arts Greater London Council. London: Greater London Council.: 162, The PCI was involved in coordinating co-operative artisan production, through the regional authority in the area around Bologna. (Mulgan and Worpole: 31, Greater London Enterprise Board. 1986a. *Altered images : towards a strategy for London's cultural industries*. London: Greater London Enterprise Board.: 6, Freedman, 2000: 197).

[1614] Thus, they viewed that if an outside state agency targeted investment, it would potentially lead to there being a more competitive media industry. Therefore, they regarded the media much more as a market form and for intervention to be justified in terms of competitiveness.

[1615] Thus, the GLEB's task was to work "...in and against the market: against the market's narrowing commercialising tendencies, but in the market place which is currently the main site where cultural needs are met or ignored". (GLEB, *Altered Images*: 4-5). Proof of this was indicated by the fact that printing and publishing was by then London's biggest manufacturing sector. The role of the cultural industries in the world competition for exports was also regarded as key. (Council, Greater London. 1985. *London industrial strategy :the cultural industries*. London: Greater London Council.: 14-5).

[1616] Mulgan and Worpole: 10.

[1617] *Ibid.*

user participation in production decisions, the adherents indicated that the market would play this role. Borrowing from liberal pluralist notions, through the market, the consumer could be king.[1618]

Yet, secondly, nevertheless, the 'cultural industries' approach had less influence than on broadcasting in shifting newspaper ownership policies in a pro-market direction.[1619] This was because the press was entirely in private hands and the public service ethos did not influence it in the same way as broadcasting.[1620] So, the cultural industries approach was as much a radical affirmation of previous Labour Party policies, at least on press diversity. When Mulgan at the GLEB considered advertising in the newspaper industry, he advocated solutions in line with previous interventionist policies.[1621] However, even here, he emphasised the market's beneficent role. He justified intervening by arguing that

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[1618] In fact, adherents even saw a market controlled by "...right-wing populist businessmen..." would provide a more appetising alternative to a Labour movement press. This was because Labour movement newspapers had a "...habit of talking down to their audience in a way that the right does not seem to". (Mulgan, Geoff, and Ken Worpole. 1986. 'Selling the paper' in Curran, *Bending reality*: 139). Although they did not go by any means as far, other Marxists who had been involved in earlier Labour Party policy development in the Bennite times now also emphasised a positive role for the market, albeit tentatively. They highlighted the failure of the market's historic alternative, the public service media, to be populist, democratic and accessible. And they downplayed the potential option of public democratic accountability. Nick Garnham, along with Joyce Epstein, in a GLC blueprint for the cultural industries, echoed the market socialist conceptions we discussed earlier. The two detached the market per se from the "...capitalist mode of production". They saw that the important areas to concentrate on were to reduce ownership power and inequality of access to resources by consumers. If this was done, then in relating consumers, distributors and producers of cultural goods and services "...the market has much to recommend it". Indeed, they argued that even within a capitalist system, at such crucial moments as the creation of newspapers in the 18th century, the market acted "...as a liberating cultural force". (Garnham, Nick and Epstein, Joyce. 1985. 'Cultural Industries, Consumption and Policy', in *The state of the art or the art of the state?: Strategies for the cultural industries in London*, edited by Department for Recreation and the Arts Greater London Council. London: Greater London Council.: 151, 152).

[1619] The Labour leadership shifted broadcasting policies more dramatically in a pro-market direction, as Freedman indicates. (Freedman, 2000:197).

[1620] Mulgan makes a similar point to this. Mulgan, Geoff. 1985. 'Advertising' in *The state of the art or the art of the state?: Strategies for the cultural industries in London*, edited by Department for Recreation and the Arts Greater London Council. London: Greater London Council.: 95. Another possible reason it was less influential could well have been that it emphasised the state's role in enhancing international competitiveness. This would have had less effect on the national and regional press. This was because international sales would rarely be key to a newspaper's success. (An exception is the *Financial Times*. At the time of writing, the majority of its sales were from outside of the UK). Certainly, the arguments about investing in cultural specificity in order to provide an internationally competitive edge would have little purchase.

[1621] He proposed an advertising levy to subsidise newsprint and distribution and fund new publications. Mulgan also advocated that public authorities provide capital to groups without market access, as was the case with the *News on Sunday*, and legally guarantee newspaper distribution. (Mulgan, 'Advertising': 94).

advertisers' power interfered with the public accountability that the responsive market afforded.[1622]

The Municipal Socialists and Their Legacy

As with the cultural industries approach, the municipal socialists' legacy was mixed. In the event, the councils' effect was not huge.[1623] Yet, they did influence Labour's national strategy and media policy advocates of both right and left. Through the auspices of *Marxism Today* and the soft left, the cultural industries approach became "...very much the buzz thing...".[1624]

On the one hand, the municipal socialists' early influence was radical. As already indicated, the GLEB was at the forefront of the GLC's strategy to confront the Thatcher government's neo-liberal marketisation. Municipal socialism also provided an explicit challenge to old-style Keynesianism. Keynesianism was seen as "...not so much wrong as inadequate".[1625] Municipal socialists attempted to address the tension within the AES, which answered Keynesianism's deficiencies with increased centralisation and also democratic participation, by emphasising the latter. They argued that Keynesianism did not address the supply side sufficiently. However, the GLEB's strategy was unlike later forms of supply-side socialism that would be championed by the end of Kinnock's time as leader. The GLEB directly encouraged democratic co-operative ownership within the

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[1622] Advertisers impeded consumers' ability to "...'vote' albeit within the clear limitations of 'consumer sovereignty' with their money". (*Ibid.*: 93-4).
[1623] Overall, the amount that the GLC spent was not enormous and "...the cultural industries strategy was unable to buck either the market or the government". (Freedman, 2000: 197).
[1624] Tricia Sumner interview with author, February 6 2002. Tricia Sumner was secretary to Labour Party's media and arts spokesman Norman Buchan and to the Labour Party arts committee. As she remembers it, Labour's media and arts policy under Buchan was "...very much..." influenced by the cultural industries approach by then. An early indication of this influence was that Geoff Mulgan was seconded from the GLC to prepare a large proportion of the national Labour Party's submission to the Peacock Committee. And Buchan provided a very positive introduction to the book written by Mulgan and Worpole, endorsing its cultural industries approach. In it, the authors advocated that Labour institute various boards. Part of their remit would be to finance commercial market ventures and public/private partnerships. (Mulgan and Worpole: 5-7, 119-129).
[1625] GLEB, *Altered Images*: 5.

organisations it financed.[1626] Its influence was felt in the radical emphasis on co-operatives, democratic control and intervention to aid diversity.[1627]

On the other hand, it also embraced the market, with calls for commercial market ventures and public/private partnerships. In some ways, this was a precursor to the social ownership ideas taken up by the soft left nationally and embraced by the Labour leadership. This again would have more effect on broadcasting, as Freedman indicates. Nevertheless, shorn of its radical politics, the Labour leadership later shared this principle with regard to the press. It was at first happy to embrace this soft left approach, as part of its more pro-market attitude. The frontbench promoted the view that the Government should invest in the media and arts in order to provide for the nation's economic well-being. It increasingly ignored the argument that provision might be for the nation's democratic health, through greater diversity and democratic access. Yet, as we saw, a later shift in press policy occurred, in tandem with that in overall economic strategy. At the same time that the commitment to Keynesian intervention waned and soft left influence on economic policy collapsed, the leadership rejected even the more marketised cultural industries approach to intervention.

With regard to overall democratic control, the emphasis on the market, rather than public participation, in decisions over production and distribution, also influenced the soft left in accommodating to the party leadership's pro-market thrust. Democratic control had always been regarded with particular suspicion due to the powerful hegemony in British society of pro-market liberal pluralist nostrums of press freedom. With only weak support

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[1626] Public ownership was seen "...not just as an end in itself, but as a means of extending the principle of socially useful production and the involvement of the workforce in planning that process". (GLEB, *Altered* Images: 6). The GLEB also wanted to increase diversity by encouraging production for and by women and black groups. (Greater London Enterprise, Board. 1986b. *Printing matters : towards a strategy for the London printing industry*. London: Greater London Enterprise Board.: 31-3, 38-9).

[1627] Again, while its emphasis on market socialism may have indicated a shift towards the market in terms of overall national policy, such was the private nature of newspaper production that any emphasis on social ownership represented a radicalising trend. This can be identified in the book written by Mulgan and Worpole, which advocated policies for the national Labour Party from the GLC experience. In it, they advocated radical national policies for Labour; including the break-up of the 'Murdoch empire' and other multinationals in newspaper production, an advertising tax to fund new initiatives and an explicit commitment to democratic accountability. (Mulgan and Worpole: 119-129).

for participative democracy, as enthusiasm for state intervention diminished, there was no other choice. The market alternative increasingly became dominant.

Appendix 1 to Chapter 7: Labour's Political Communications Policy

Blair's political communication policy was clear from the start. To a significant extent, it reverted to the later Kinnock period. On becoming leader, Blair reinstalled the key strategists Mandelson and Philip Gould to key positions of power. Gould once again oversaw the focus groups. The period up to the 1997 general election saw Blair appoint the MP Mandelson to a central media co-ordinating role in the new headquarters at Millbank.[1628] Policy was centralised around the leadership. There was ferocious attention to keeping the party on-message. Press relations would no longer even be nominally under NEC control.[1629]

However, there were divergences from the Kinnock years. There is sense in which the revised press and media strategy was particularly attractive under New Labour. Franklin is among those who have perceptively chronicled the broader commitment of parties and politicians in government to using the media to market their politics and the centrality of New Labour to this.[1630] But in one particular respect, New Labour's politics could appeal to the different layers of the media hierarchy, not just the senior press management and owners, in a way that Labour, at least in the recent past, could not. The Labour left had made much of the way that the SDP was said to be particularly attractive to journalists.[1631] New Labour's politics had a similar pull. One disillusioned moderniser Bryan Gould describes a grouping that was found markedly in the national media, which: "...are the people who had always wanted a party that would salve their consciences

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[1628] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: esp. 299-304. The focus group approach had continued to a limited extent after 1992 when focus group results that blamed the unions for electoral defeat shaped the strategic debate in the Smith era, despite evidence to the contrary. (Wring, *Political marketing and organisational development*: 16). As we saw, however, other areas of political communications diverged under Smith.

[1629] The arrangements stipulated that a new Joint Campaigns and Elections Committee would oversee "...strategic responsibility for campaigns and message delivery." (Labour Party National Executive, Committee. 1997. Partnership in power. London: National Executive Committee, Labour Party, 1997.).

[1630] Franklin, *Packaging Politics*, 2004.

[1631] See Benn, *The end of an era* and Stephenson, Hugh. 1982. Claret and chips : the rise of the SDP.' London: Joseph, 1982.

...without threatening the comfortable privilege which they enjoyed and expected...".[1632] New Labour appealed to this layer.

An indication of Blair's attraction to the media world was the way that media executives were at the centre of Blair's party leadership campaign. It was millionaire media bosses Barry Cox and Greg Dyke and who linked up with their ex-LWT employee Mandelson in the campaign.[1633] Cox, as the Blair team's treasurer, was said to have raised much of its funding from other senior media executives.[1634] Indeed, the support of Greg Dyke, who was to become BBC director general, could have said to be emblematic of Labour's shift.[1635]

A similarity of Blair with Kinnock was how the broadsheet press initially treated them. The difference was that Blair's honeymoon was far lengthier.[1636] Another key difference from Kinnock's time was that Blair was more naturally in tune with the instincts of the press and media agenda. Unlike Kinnock, who had to adapt, to some extent unsuccessfully, Blair was at ease with the soundbite culture.

[1632] These people had always had a problem with Labour..." – until New Labour was born. Conduits, such as Mandelson, before his fall from grace, inhabited and understood this small world, which had been, nonetheless, "...disproportionately important in shaping the political agenda....". (Gould, Bryan. 1999. 'The long retreat from principle', *New Statesman*, January 29 1999). Other writers in the US have made a similar point about national journalists' political leanings. The Conservative right in America has long denounced the liberal bias of the press. In terms of individual journalists, they can point to surveys that show that a large majority of the Washington press corps voted for the Democrats. Yet, as McChesney indicates their liberalism is of a similar kind – liberal on social issues but more conservative on economic ones. (McChesney, Corporate media: 55-7).

[1633] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 202.

[1634] Cohen, Nick. 2000. *Cruel Britannia : reports on the sinister and the preposterous*. London: Verso, 2000.: 236.

[1635] Dyke was a left-wing journalist who became a millionaire through his involvement with LWT. He was quoted as saying after making his money and attending American business courses that he had changed his view to consider that "...it was possible to run capitalism with a social conscience". (Horrie, Chris, and Steve Clarke. 2000. *Citizen Greg : the extraordinary story of Greg Dyke and how he captured the BBC*. London: Simon & Schuster, 2000.: 245, 248).

[1636] Blair's sympathetic biographer noted of his leadership election campaign that it: "...was remarkable for two things: the utter blandness of his platform, and the favourable media coverage it received". (Rentoul: 393). Blair's first conference as party leader in 1994 was striking for the laudatory comments heaped on him. Simon Jenkins in the *Times*, the old Tory warhorse but Major sceptic Simon Heffer in the *Telegraph* and, less surprisingly, the *Financial Times* were all effusive in their praise. (Culf, Andrew. 1994. 'Tory papers salute Blair as prime minister in waiting', *The Guardian*, October 6 1994).

However, a most significant change from the pre-Smith days was the targeting of the tabloid press. Campbell, whose background was on the tabloids and had worked on News Corporation title *Today*, provided a vital link and became the central figure in the new media strategy. As former senior journalist Nicholas Jones told the author, Campbell superseded Mandelson from the time he became Blair's press secretary.[1637]

Now, the *Sun* was in Labour's sights. In Kinnock's time, Mandelson had primarily considered the broadsheets as necessary to target, to set the agenda for the all-important broadcasters. Campbell saw that the tabloids also set the agenda for broadcast journalists – a correct assessment, as the former broadcaster Jones confirmed to the author.[1638] In addition, as we have seen, Kinnock had believed that 'it was the Sun wot won it'. Academic research by a journalist who was to become a Blair-sympathising MP gave important support for this view. The tabloids had influenced sufficient voters.[1639] Whether this was an accurate assessment or not is not the important point at this juncture. Other studies had questioned whether the newspapers had had a sizeable effect.[1640] The

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[1637] Jones told the author in 2002: "He and Blair were working as a partnership... Campbell is the one with the flair, he will be the one who will be thinking ahead...Of course Mandelson and Gould were phenomenally important. But I think it was Campbell who from the very word 'go' was working out ... the projection of Blair. Where Campbell is so good is in understanding the needs of the media some way down the track... So, he will be thinking ahead to how they are going to exploit something, and that is something that he picked up and they did very very quickly – whether we are talking about the World Cup, whether we are talking about the next summit meeting... So, if ... you think of how Campbell orchestrated the defections of Tory MPs ... they were always timed to coincide with the start of the Tory conference. They know just what they were doing. If you were thinking about how they got top people to declare their support for Labour, that was always done on the eve of critical moments... I think Campbell's strength... is that whole inner ability to be able to predict to Blair how the popular papers are going to react, because...of the impact that the popular papers and the broadsheets, the newspapers as a whole, have on this agenda setting in the media." (Jones interview).

[1638] "If one of the populars has a really big story ... we would pick it up. Have their headlines, have their story directions influenced us? Yes, they have. If you listen to any interview on the Today Programme, and one of the papers is running a big campaign, and the minister is in there, once you have seen today's papers, now we don't say 'the *Mirror*' or 'the *Sun*', but you have only got to listen to the interviews, they are reflecting the newspapers." (Jones interview).

[1639] Linton was to spend a year researching the influence of the tabloids on the 1992 election. He concluded that the tabloids, particularly, did influence the election. He insisted that the "...main recruiting sergeant for John Major in the last few months before the election was the *Sun*..." and that the *Daily Mail* and the Express group were also important allies. (Linton, Martin. 1995. *Was it The Sun wot won it?* Oxford: Nuffield College, 1995.: esp. 29-31).

[1640] Martin Harrop and Margaret Scammell in Butler, David, and Dennis Kavanagh. 1992. *The British general election of 1992*. Basingstoke: Macmillan., John Curtice and Holi Semetko, 'Does it matter what the press say?' in Heath, A. F., Roger Jowell, and John Curtice. 1994. *Labour's last chance? : the 1992 election and beyond*. Dartmouth, Aldershot: Dartmouth Pub. Co.. Even Kinnock may have been mislead by Lord McAlpine's assertion. McAlpine wanted to belittle Conservative Chris Pattern's role in the campaign.

more important question is whether Labour would have won without the tabloids in 1997 – a question which cannot be satisfactorily answered without consulting a crystal ball. Nevertheless, the fact that Labour was leading in the polls before the rapprochement with the tabloids and held on to that lead is salient in this regard.

What is important is that this assessment confirmed the judgment that had already been made. That was that the Labour Party needed the support of the tabloid newspapers, and particularly the *Sun*, if it was to be elected. Despite the claim that his wife would not allow the title in the house, it became clear that the *Sun* was Labour's prize after Blair took over the leadership.[1641] Both Campbell, who experienced the press's drubbing of the former party leader at first hand, as both a frontline journalist and a Kinnock ally, and Blair shared this view.[1642] After the election, such was Blair's gratitude that he wrote to the *Sun*'s then editor "...to thank you for your magnificent support..." which "...really did make the difference".[1643]

(Oborne: 140). In praising the editors, he could strike a right-wing blow against the more patricianary Tory. The Sun's former chief leader writer was another sceptic about the claims. (Spark, Ronald. 1997. 'It was Rupert Murdoch wot done it', *Daily Telegraph*, March 19 1997). For other positions in this debate see also the discussion in Franklin, *Packaging Politics*, 2004: 219-220 and in Greenslade: *Press Gang*: 606-7.

[1641] Anne Robinson wrote in her *Sun* column that Cherie Blair had told her at a journalist reception that she did not allow the *Sun* in her house . (Glover, Stephen. 1995. 'This bogus love affair', *Evening Standard*, December 13 1995).

[1642] Peter Mandelson, when asked on behalf of the author, said that, in planning for the 1997 election, Labour strategists had researched the 1992 treatment of Kinnock. Their view was "...one of horror, that any party could have been subjected to such horror in a country...Tony Blair, reading all this, said: 'I would not have voted Labour myself.'" (Mandelson, Peter, Lecture at the London School of Economics, February 25 2003). As for Campbell: "He has always made it clear that that was the thing that has driven him, was the way in which the tabloids destroyed Kinnock, that was the thing that he was determined never ever should happen to Blair... That is of fundamental importance."(Jones interview). According to Campbell's biographer, Blair and Campbell believed that the *Sun*'s support "...was a necessary, and possibly a sufficient precondition for Labour victory at the General Election." Blair called on MPs after being elected leader to "...pay 'more attention to the tabloids'." This particularly focused on the 'Murdoch press': "Alastair Campbell was profoundly affected, well before becoming Downing Street Press Secretary, by two visceral experiences. One was the way the media destroyed Neil Kinnock as a credible Leader of the Opposition. The other was the Media Class's destruction of John Major as Prime Minister. He is determined the same fate should not afflict Tony Blair. Everything he has done as Press Secretary is designed to prevent that – including the bullying, the manipulation, the distortion and above all the cultivation of News International." (Oborne: 140-1, 194).

[1643] Interview with Greenslade, Roy. 1997. 'Nice one Sun, says Tony', *The Guardian*, May 19 1997. Also cited in Draper, Derek. 1997. *Blair's hundred days*. London: Faber and Faber, 1997.: 129 and Freedman, 2000: 225.

The tabloids, Murdoch and democracy

This fêting of the tabloids was termed by one perceptive commentator as an aspect of "...a ruling ideology of elite populism...".[1644] However, this could be seen as, more accurately, a tension between facilitating a specific elite, a *business* elite, and populism. One aspect of the speech at the Hayman Island particularly likely to appeal to the self-styled pro-market 'anti-elitist' Murdoch was Blair's opposition to the Establishment and the old-boy network.[1645] In this sense, both Blair and Murdoch shared a *market* populist outlook, particularly identified with the United States.[1646]

In Thomas Frank's fascinating work, he chronicles the development of this market populist phenomenon in the United States, as part of a new neo-liberal consensus. In the market populist world, markets express the will of the people through demand and supply. The entrepreneur, rather than being part of an elite, represents the people's will. Therefore, any union or party, profession or expert wanting to criticise or regulate business is, de facto, anti-democratic. They are the elite. Borrowing from Hayek's analysis, they egotistically ignore the people. Thus, an influential US text saw the supposed triumph of market-dominated globalisation as a victory for democracy, as markets were "voting machines". By buying goods or even watching commercials, people were *voting for the market*. Others argued that, in financial markets, popular stock ownership meant people were voting 'every hour'.[1647]

Thus, this view challenged what we can term the traditional social democratic conception of economic democracy – that state intervention, i.e. regulation, could be justified on behalf of the people. Some corporate gurus linked such arguments to the view that there

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[1644] Certainly, Cohen is correct to point out what would be the problems for New Labour of the potential takeover of Manchester United by News Corporation's BSkyB, torn between being populist backers of the supporters and 'Murdoch's facilitator'. (Cohen, *Cruel Britannia*: 234).
[1645] McKie, Clingers: 117.
[1646] This was also a possible inspiration for the Blair's later 'forces of conservatism' theme. While there is undeniably snobbery and elitism shown in criticisms of the *Sun*, a relevant notion runs through the argument of Matthew Parris that to criticise Rupert Murdoch shows a 'fear of democracy'. (Parris, Matthew. 1998. 'How Murdoch interferes less than other propreitors', *New Statesman*, March 14 1998.)
[1647] Frank: 29-31, 43, 56, 55, 93.

was a New Economy based on new management ideas. They hoped that the stock exchange would carry on rising as it had got rid of these old tools of economic democracy. For workers, this New Economy conception saw unions – instruments of this old economic democracy – being replaced by flattened anti-hierarchical organisations where all people were market agents. Thus, even 'downsizing' was argued as a democratic measure. People freed from the constraints of corporate life – i.e. fired – would now be 'free agents' able to take advantage of the market.[1648]

The thinkers of Demos who became Blair's No. 10 advisers were conduits for these ideas entering New Labour's consciousness. Leadbetter and Mulgan wrote on New Economy and market populist themes, some criticising regulatory state control and praising the democracy of the market. These works attracted praise from Blair and Mandelson among others.[1649]

However, this view of market populism – of one dollar, one vote – was plutocracy, not democracy. As indicated before, people neither voted for Rupert Murdoch nor Bill Gates. Also, the view that the retreat of intervention was a motor of prosperity was exposed by the stock market falls in the US and latterly Britain, which highlighted the need for such regulation.[1650]

[1648] Ibid.: 169, 179-80, 203-4.

[1649] Mulgan, for instance, cited Hayek's critique that the market was "...more democratic than the formal institutions of democracy...". He argued that Hayek's conception of the inferiority of the state to the market had become 'devastating' in the era of new management techniques. (Mulgan, Geoff. 1994. *Politics in an antipolitical age*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994.: 127). This was linked with the implausible claim that taxation and interventionist regimes "...can all be traced back to absolutism and monarchical rule...". This is an assertion clearly questioned by the history of the United States. (Leadbetter, Charles, and Geoff Mulgan. 1997. 'Lean Democracy and the Leadership Vacuum', Pp. 246-259 in *Life after politics : new thinking for the twenty-first century*, edited by Geoff Mulgan and Demos. London: Fontana, 1997.: 256, Frank: 351). When Mulgan and another person who was to be employed as a No. 10 adviser Andrew Adonis wrote, they considered a major threat to democracy was "...democratic bureaucracy..." – or regulatory state control – and ignored the problem of business power. (Adonis, Andrew and Mulgan, Geoff. 1997. 'Back to Greece: The Scope for Direct Democracy' in Mulgan, *Life*: 232). According to Frank, although the works seemed impressive; "...what Leadbetter and Mulgan had done was simply round up various clichés from popular management literature and, adopting a tone of extreme historical righteousness, recast them as political advice. It was all there: The flattened, antihierarchical corporation as the way of the future, attacks on Taylorism, breathless praise for the 'learning organization', the magic of 'networks', even talk about 'free agents'." (Frank: 347-8)

[1650] Ibid.: 86-7, 97, 93, 366-9.

Focus groups and the party

Nevertheless, marketplace techniques, when applied to politics, were seen thus to be part of the same 'democratisation'. Rather than trying to democratise business, the view was that not only should government be pro-business, democracy should learn from a market model, as we saw in the last chapter. New Labour thinkers used similar arguments to champion an aspect of political communication strategy we discussed previously – the use of polling. Its use was seen as part of "...the demise in the faith of the efficacy of representative democracy...", a notion made famous by Mandelson and applied equally to the use of focus groups and other PR-based techniques. [1651]

This notion, often only tentatively expressed, was, typically, more stridently outlined by Philip Gould. He argued that such market research techniques were not just an aspect of campaigning. They were "...an important part of the democratic process: part of a necessary dialogue between politicians and people, part of the new approach to politics".[1652]

As is famously known, the use of both the qualitative and quantitative polling techniques identified in the last chapter were redeployed in a similar way as under Kinnock, in an approach not seen under Smith.

They were part of a strategy which led to further party centralisation along the lines identified previously. While disagreeing about much, Peter Mair and Anthony Barnett concur that what New Labour has attempted to provide is a *Partyless Democracy*. There has been an attempt to eliminate inner party dissent and intra-party democracy. The party as a level of mediation between government and citizen is dispensed with. The strategy is

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[1651] Leadbetter, Charles, and Geoff Mulgan. 1997. 'Lean Democracy and the Leadership Vacuum' Pp. 246-259 in Mulgan, Life.: 256. Mandelson argued that "...the era of pure representative democracy is slowly coming to an end...". (Traynor, I., 'Peter's Passions', *The Guardian*, 16 March 1998, cited in Franklin, Hand of History: 143).

[1652] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 297-8. "Focus groups and market research are an essential part of this dialogue. This is the new people's democracy – "...involving them in the political process". (Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 328).

undemocratic in the sense that the potential for choice and debate is done away with.[1653] In this sense, this view shares the dangers of the 'end of politics' notion we considered in Chapter 1. This is 'corporate populism' where there is attachment to big business, at times in conflict with 'the will of the people'.[1654]

In this sense, it can be seen as part of the same market populism that married Blair's instincts with those of Murdoch. As the remarkable television documentary series on the use of Freudian techniques, marketing and modern politics, *The Century of the Self* explained, it was part of a conception that saw voters as individualised marketised consumers. Moreover, the focus group technique had been employed since earlier on in the last century by PR agencies and advertisers, under the influence of Freudians, to unmask unconscious desires, which could then be satiated. People were encouraged not to talk rationally in the groups organised by political strategists, but to discuss their feelings. This replicated what had happened in advertising-based groups.[1655]

New Labour saw the focus groups' use as a triumph of a new form of democracy and the end of elitist politics. What the elitist slant of the TV documentary emphasised was that

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[1653] Mair, Peter. 2000. "Partyless Democracy." New Left Review .: 21-35, Barnett, Anthony. 2000. "Corporate Populism and Partyless Democracy." New Left Review .: 81-9.

[1654] This work's definition of this does not entirely accord with Barnett's. (Barnett: 81-9).

[1655] This method was regularly employed in focus groups regularly prior to 1992, along with the psychological dissecting of the results. So for one instance among a number, one report discusses the "...desire for strong, decisive and visible leadership...(Parent-child relationship)". (Butterfield et al). This method was also employed after 1992. So Gould's records of a focus group taken in January 1997 in the run up to election indicates such comments as "I am frightened about a leap in the dark" and "I feel comfortable now." (Gould, 'Top-Line Findings' January 9 1997, quoted in Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 283, my emphasis). Another example of this process was a Labour practitioner's case study of the Falkirk by-election in 2002, considering focus group work which Labour campaigners embarked on before the election. The appeal of the 'product', Labour candidate Eric Joyce, was moulded to respond to the strong support of focus groups for the previous left Labour candidate Dennis Cannavan. However, this did not mean that his position shifted to support Canavan's policies. In a campaign video produced partly responding to the feelings of those expressed in the focus groups, he merely showed his appreciation for Canavan and controversially implied that he himself was in the traditional Labour mould. As the Labour Party press officer involved with the campaign said: "A lot of this is not rational ... It is about getting a good feeling from voters." (Brind, Don. 2002. The Labour Video Project, Presentation given to the Bournemouth University/London School of Economics Promotional Practices and Political Participation conference, 22 November 2002).

the problem for New Labour was that such techniques only amplified focus groups participants' 'maze of contradictory desires'.[1656]

However, what the documentary's fascinating analysis ignored was that what was being offered group participants was *not* a democratic process. In encouraging these "...unelected and unaccountable groups of individuals..."[1657] to express their feelings, they were not being given the chance to provide their own rationally and consciously developed alternatives and to select between them. Instead, the focus group staff interpreted the deliberately undeveloped desires. Equally, as Franklin makes clear, through its news management techniques, Labour was shaping the information on which these focus groups were forming their ideas.[1658] This mode of consultation, rather than decision-making, had echoes, albeit bereft of its Freudian implications, in what was now happening in the local Labour Party policy forums.

Representation, press policy and the unions

As indicated in the chapter, Labour's press ownership policy did not face the concerted opposition within the party from the unions that such a policy shift would have encountered in the past. One reason for this was that it was not one of the TUC's priorities. The TUC told press activists that its limited resources were to be channeled into other concerns.[1659]

According to Mike Smith, the then head of the TUC's Press and Information Department, the feeling was that attempts to set up a Labour movement newspaper and change press ownership policies had 'run their course'.[1660] One reason was that the TUC was paralleling the party by concentrating on getting better representation for itself, rather

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[1656] *The Century of the Self*, Part Four, RDF Media, BBC Two.
[1657] Franklin, Bob, and Trust Catalyst. 1998. *Tough on soundbites, tough on the causes of soundbites : New Labour and news management : a Catalyst paper*. London: Catalyst Trust, 1998.
[1658] *Ibid.*
[1659] Granville Williams interview.
[1660] Other reasons cited were that the unions themselves were more involved in campaigning on press ownership and that it was felt with a hostile government in office there was little purchase in attempting to develop policy in this area. (Mike Smith, interview with author, October 1 2002).

than by following the media union's demands to concentrate on attempting to increase diversity. They were following a strategy of engaging with the existing press rather than challenging it.

As Aeron Davis' work makes clear, the unions had shifted from a position of supporting alternative newspapers as a key strategy, to professionalising their PR operations. The end of the TUC's Media Working Group "...appeared to coincide with a new attitude towards the media". The TUC relaunched itself as a 'campaigning and public affairs organisation'.[1661] Spin pundit and broadcaster Nicholas Jones had advised the unions in his 1986 book *Strikes and the Media* to engage rather than enrage the media.[1662] Jones agreed with the author that, subsequently, the unions had followed this path in a "...real charm offensive".[1663] Davis shows that unions heeded Jones' call. They increased media contact and communication resources in the 1990s and improved their attitudes towards public relations.[1664] As Williams puts it: "Gradually trade unions moved towards setting up their own press and PR departments to try and get their views across in the media. And so, they had moved as well towards a policy of accommodation rather than structural reform."[1665] One senior media union official concluded, the TUC was "...very much establishing good relations with existing power, rather than challenging power...I think, like the Labour Party, they had become much more interested in good relations with the mass media".[1666]

In 1994, the TUC relaunched its communications organisation – along similar lines to the Labour Party before and after Smith. Almost ten years after Labour, it set up a Campaigns and Communications Department which included, as part of its remit,

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[1661] Davis, Aeron. 2002. *Public relations democracy : public relations, politics, and the mass media in Britain.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.: 114-5, 122, 125-149.
[1662] Jones, Nicholas. 1986. *Strikes and the media: communication and conflict.* Oxford: Blackwell.
[1663] Jones interview.
[1664] Davis, *Public relations democracy*: 179).
[1665] Granville Williams interview. As a senior NUJ official told the author: "It was a response to the political decline of the Labour movement ... the unions started to develop their modern media strategies, and it was an attempt to win public acceptance of the trade unions." (Tim Gopsill interview).
[1666] Tim Gopsill interview.

renewing media relations and engaging in opinion research.[1667] This shift in emphasis prompted the NUJ's general secretary to voice fears that the TUC was trying to stifle dissent, like the Labour Party "...in case they might upset the media or their political friends...". He suggested this was counterproductive, even in terms of getting coverage.[1668]

One reason for this collapse of enthusiasm for diversity may have been the demise of the *News On Sunday*. As we saw, sizeable parts of the trade union leadership invested large sums of money in the project. Along with members of the Labour Party, from Kinnock downwards, they saw the *News on Sunday* as a vehicle for Labour representation and diversity. As was also indicated, some of those closer to the project were profoundly demoralised. And unions cited its failure as the reason not to campaign for proposals to democratise and diversify the press. Williams, of the North West regional council of the TUC and the CPBF, agreed that it affected the most committed unions' view to campaigning on press diversity: "It did have a very important effect, if you want, in closing down that...idea of a radical...solution."[1669] The demoralisation, as a senior NUJ official told the author, added to the feeling among union leaders that they were not "...interested at all in running their own media. I think they are interested in good relations with existing media...".[1670]

[1667] Mike Smith, interview with author, October 1 2002, Trade Union, Congress. 1996. General Council report : Congress 1996: the 128th annual Trades Union Congress, 9-13 September, Blackpool: Trade Union Congress, 1996.: 138.

[1668] Foster, John. 'The TUC is dying of boredom', *The Journalist*, October 1999.

[1669] "They put their money in and they thought there would be some expertise there to make it work. That is the sad thing – it didn't.... It was the Labour daily but in a different, mutated form.... There were big meetings and there were big personal commitments – both in putting money in and also in supporting a paper, which each week that it came out, your heart sank further and further. So I think you are right... I don't think there was ever a wide debate – it was a kind of silence. You would get some meetings where people would say: 'What are the lessons of the News on Sunday?'. But most people thought it was like a dear friend that had died...: 'Don't talk about it'." (Granville Williams interview).

[1670] Tim Gopsill interview.

This is, primarily, a study of policy formation in the Labour Party. However, it would be remiss to not further consider how the state and state actors influence Labour in government. This links both to the question of Labour representation in the press and press ownership policy. This is, of course, a huge analytical question, of which this theory-testing work as a whole touches upon. At this stage, however, we can make a few points, both about approaching this study and about how in practice Labour acted on coming into office. The first is that Labour confronted an administration that had been significantly centralised and it centralised the process further, as we shall see in a moment.

The second is that we are studying party policy formation, rather than government implementation.[1671] Here, despite Michael Hill's questioning of this approach to studying state policy creation, it *is* appropriate to consider the state policy process as a series of stages, albeit with complex feedback flows, of which party policy creation need only be considered in relation to some.[1672] Hill, himself, usefully creates a typology of the whole state policy creation process, as having a party political, a bargaining and an administrative thread, which we will adapt.[1673]

[1671] The two can be confused. If we were considering a state policy process, we would need to take into account implementation as well as formation. The development of party policy in government is not the same.

[1672] One study identifies the stages as initiation, information, consideration, decision, implementation, evaluation and termination. Of these, only the first four need concern us. (Hill, Michael. 1997. *The policy process in the modern state*. London: Prentice Hall, 1997.: 18-27).

[1673]

	Party Political	Bargaining	Administrative
Key actors	Parties	Pressure groups	Civil servants
Stage – space	Public	Public and private	Private
Key stage – time	Early	Middle	End

(Ibid.: 111). This is perhaps over-rigid in its delineation – a point Hill tacitly acknowledges later. (Ibid.: 116). This rigidity is ironic considering Hill's concern over other stagist typology.

Party Politics

Even those theorists of the Labour Party considered in Appendix 1 to Chapter 1 who placed the largest stress on external factors in Labour government policy formation, saw the creation of party policy as important to consider. What the Marxist and elitist theorists emphasised was the dominance of the leadership. As we saw earlier in this chapter, the leadership under the new right further strengthened its hold on the party. So, in a sense what we are considering now in analysing the influence of the party on government policy is that of the *leadership* on state policies.

Hill notes that, while journalists tend to exaggerate the party political influence on the state policy process, political scientists tend to underplay them.[1674] Nevertheless, past comparative studies both of central government – at least with regard to Europe and Australia – and local government have shown that policy outputs have been affected by having different parties in political control.[1675] Particularly, while Castles is guarded about making huge claims for political parties' power, from his research we can argue that parties have some influence in policy development.[1676]

Nevertheless, this influence is proscribed by significant limits. We have referred to other extra-party influences on the policy formation of globalisation in this chapter and the constraints of capitalist accumulation on policy development in Chapter 1. At this stage, we will touch on the influences of the bargaining process, with the role of interest or lobbying groups and that of the administrative process, including that of civil servants.

[1674] *Ibid.*: 113.

[1675] L.J. Sharpe and Kenneth Newton's comparative study of local government (where a number of other variables can be brought under control) indicated this. (Sharpe, L. J., and Kenneth Newton. 1984. *Does politics matter? : the determinants of public policy.* Oxford: Clarendon, 1984.: esp. chapter 9, cited in Hill: 36)

[1676] *Ibid.*: 36, citing Castles Francis, G., and Research European Consortium for Political. 1982. The Impact of parties : politics and policies in democratic capitalist states. London: Sage. While such studies might disprove a more crude Marxist analysis, for instance, it is questionable to include these as a variant of pluralism, however, as Hill does.

Bargaining[1677]

It was made abundantly clear that there would be no return to the 1974 government-style corporatism on Labour's return to office.[1678] Instead, as we have seen, Blair's offer of 'fairness not favours' meant that beer and sandwiches at No. 10 were exchanged for minimal guarantees on union representation. In government, in contrast to the pluralist notions, adapted into corporatism, union influence was much reduced compared to the previous Labour administration.[1679]

Instead, business was the dominant force in policy bargaining. An example of this was provided by the use of task forces.[1680] Richards and Smith see that trade unionists were involved in these.[1681] And it would be a mistake to ignore the role of such pressure groups such as NGOs on individual policy determination, away from the task forces. However, there was little representation of users and consumers.[1682] Instead, 'corporate-ism' of a new sort became the order of the day. Among those task forces created in 1997,

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[1677] The extent to which the bargaining process – or as it is now better described, the lobbying process, is overt, according to Hill, depends on the extent there is 'public controversy' on an issue. (*Ibid.*: 117) This points to a perennial problem with media policy analysis. The degree to which there is public controversy is, largely, gauged by the media. During the lobbying by the BMIG, the members' newspapers gave the BMIG relatively uncritical coverage. (Goodwin, Peter, and Institute British Film. 1998. *Television under the Tories : broadcasting policy, 1979-1997*. London: BFI Publishing, 1998.: 144) Thus, press ownership questions may be an example of where 'public controversy' is more difficult to assess. This may indicate that that press ownership lobbying could remain more covert than other equally controversial issues. However, competition between newspapers and between the newspapers, and other printed media and broadcasters, while more muted, provides a limited counterbalance to this.

[1678] See Middlemas, Keith. 1980. *Politics in industrial society : the experience of the British system since 1911*. London: Deutsch, 1980. and Coates, David. 1980. *Labour in power? : a study of the Labour Government, 1974-1979*. London ; New York: Longman.

[1679] One indication of this was that, in his first term in office, Blair spent far less time with the unions than under the previous Wilson and Callaghan governments. Dennis Kavanagh and Anthony Seldon explain this shift as primarily caused by changes in party management: "Reforms of the party under Kinnock and Blair have reduced the problems posed by the unions, conference and NEC." (Kavanagh, Dennis , and Anthony Seldon. 2000. 'Support for the Prime Minister; the Hidden Influence of No. 10' in *Transforming government*, edited by R. A. W. Rhodes, Economic, and Council Social Research. Basingstoke: Macmillan in association with Economic and Social Research Council.: 78)

[1680] The numbers of these are unclear. Part of the problem is the terms 'task force', review' and 'advisory group' have been used interchangeably. (Burch, Martin , and Ian Holliday. 2000. 'New Labour and the machinery of government' in Lawler and Coates: 72).

[1681] Richards, David , and Martin J Smith. 2001. *New Labour, the Constitution and Reforming the State*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2001.: 153.

[1682] Morrison, John, and Reuters. 2001. *Reforming Britain : New Labour, new constitution?* London: Pearson Education, 2001.: 288-9

the industrialist Lord Haskins chaired the one on regulation.[1683] The concerns expressed in the trade union movement about business influence were so stark that it led even a normally level-headed and comparatively moderate union leader to describe the DTI as "...acting as the provisional wing of the CBI".[1684]

Administration

Given that the bargaining process in government was more significantly weighted to business, we can explore the influence the Labour leadership has had on policy-making in government. We will argue that policy-making has greatly centralised around the Labour leadership in Labour's time in office. Ministerial influence, but particularly Prime Ministerial influence has increased. Methodologically, this is important because it suggests that Labour policy, by now dominated by the leadership, would direct Government policy. But also, we shall argue that this was in part a product of the continued strategy to provide Labour press representation in office.

The traditional 'Whitehall model', in which career civil servants served varying political regimes impartially, was questioned by leading Labour actors in the 1970s. Benn was the most prominent critic of a civil service culture hostile to radical thought.[1685] However,

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[1683] Richards and Smith: 153. This may have been another case of style rather than substance, with a Labour government determined to placate business interests by seeming to put them in at the heart of government. But the Labour leadership eagerly declared its enthusiasm for business from before entering office. Two examples of this need suffice. One was Labour's claim, based on its commitment to low business tax, and reduced business and labour market regulation, that: "...far from being in conflict, the interests of the Labour Party and business are in harmony." (Labour, Party. 1997b. *Labour's business manifesto : equipping Britain for the future.* London: Labour Party, 1997.: 1). The second was the fact that during its re-election campaign, one of its slogans was 'Labour, the Party of Business'. While standing under this banner, Brown announced that in Labour's second term, the classroom should be the next target of the pro-business message. He wanted "...every teacher to be fluent in the language of enterprise". (Johnson, Frank. 2001. 'Election Sketch', *Daily Telegraph*, May 15 2001).

[1684] T & G News Release. 2002. 'Judge's attack confirms T&G view of no confidence in DTI', T&G, January 18 2002.

[1685] Benn, *Against the tide*: esp. 329, 505, 508-9. A rather instrumentalist Marxist analysis from Ralph Miliband, following the radical elitists, had implicitly ascribed this traditional hostility partly to the social composition of the civil service. (Miliband, *The state in capitalist society*: 46-7). This had been criticised by Nicos Poulantzas. (Poulantzas, Nicos. 1973. *The problem of the capitalist state.* London: Heinemann Educational, 1973.)

this model had been challenged in 1980s. The Thatcher regime effectively broke this mould by:

- dissolving the civil service monopoly of advice to ministers
- weakening senior civil servants' policy-making power, through a new 'managerialism', which made them managers rather than policymakers
- developing a central policy unit to help contest civil service advice.[1686]

Thus, civil service policymaking power has been eroded. One aspect of the Conservative introduction of managerialism was that policy-making either went upwards to the ministers or has been devolved to lower ranking civil servants.[1687] Thus, this is one way that ministers have increased their power at civil servants' expense. They "...have less autonomy than they used to...".[1688]

However, none of these changes are such that one can simply accept the view that Britain had *New Labour in Power* after 1997.[1689] Civil servants in Blair's administrations still had an important policy-making role. They still had a key position in what we can call agenda setting in decision-making – that is setting the terrain for Labour politicians' decisions.[1690] Nevertheless, the influence of Labour leadership policy on the New Labour government is extensive and change in the Government's machinery strengthened this.

Secondly, decision-making has centralised more around No. 10. Some question that there has been an onset of presidentialism in government decision-making, emphasising the

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[1686] Wilson Graham, K., and Colin Campbell. 1995. *The end of Whitehall : death of a paradigm?* Oxford: Blackwell, 1995. cited in *Ibid.*: 83, Smith, Martin J, David Richards, and David Marsh. 2000. 'The Changing Role of Central Government Departments' in Rhodes, *Transforming government*: 160, Morrison: 274.

[1687] Smith and Marsh: 160, Morrison: 274.

[1688] Smith and Marsh: 160, 156, 163. Philip Norton's research also suggests that senior ministers still have power, yet much of his research covers the period before 1997. (Norton, Philip. 2000. *Barons in a Shrinking Kingdom: Senior Ministers in British Government*. Basingstoke: Macmillan in association with Economic and Social Research Council, 2000.: 101- 124).

[1689] This was a surprising title for a book co-edited by David Coates – an extremely learned Marxist writer who previously delineated between Labour being in office and being in power. (Lawler and Coates, Coates, *Labour in power?*).

[1690] Smith and Marsh: 156.

greater role for ministers, that has just been alluded to.[1691] However, developments since 1997 have questioned that assessment, leaving one former senior civil servant to join with academics in seeing a continuing demise of Cabinet government under Blair.[1692] The leadership have reorganised policy-making control in government in a similar fashion to that in the Labour Party. In the same way that, in opposition, the party leadership had used the Short money to develop a centralised research base, so in government, it focused policy creation, while contradictorily wishing to disperse power.[1693]

Thirdly, and related to this, the special advisers' function has been important. In the context of our concerns, they have played a dual role. They have helped facilitate the Government's centralisation and have had a key position in press relations and 'spin'.

Special advisers are not new. Prime Minister Lloyd George appointed temporary ministerial advisers. Harold Wilson systematised the process. He appointed 30 'political advisers' in 15 departments, including No. 10, in 1974. For 20 years, the numbers did not vary much. Yet, they steeply rose after Labour entered office again. At the end of the last century, there were 74.[1694] By 2002, there were 81 – two and a half times the earlier figure.[1695] The amount spent on them doubled in Labour's time in office.[1696]

[1691] *Ibid.*: 160. Philip Norton's research also suggests that senior ministers still have power, yet much of his research covers the period before 1997. (Norton: 101- 124).

[1692] The former head of the civil service Robin Butler is among those who view that there has been a demise of cabinet government. (Morrison: 277-81).

[1693] Richards and Smith: 148, Morrison: 277-81. This notably involved one of Ralph Miliband's sons, David, who headed the Policy Unit. Not to overplay the point, but continuing the Miliband theme, there was also an attempt to change the social composition of the civil service through recruitment in some departments, notably the Foreign Office. The Prime Minister's Office has also continued to expand, since Blair has emphasised his own role in policy creation. (Kavanagh and Seldon: 63-78, Richards and Smith: 151). The Prime Minister's Policy Unit expanded. The Government appointed a minister without portfolio, with the role of policy coordination. Interestingly, its first incumbent was Mandelson. The Cabinet Office was strengthened in 1998, with the development of the Performance and Innovation Unit, reporting to Number 10, under the aegis of Geoff Mulgan. Again, this has strengthened the political centre at the expense of 'the departmental view'. (Richards and Smith: 151. See also Kavanagh and Seldon: 72 and Burch and Holliday: 68).

[1694] Committee on Standards in Public Life. 2000. Sixth Report: Reinforcing Standards. HMSO.: Section 6.5-6.7. See also Select Committee on Public Administration, Fourth Report: Special Advisers: Boon Or Bane, December 13 2001: Section 1, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmpubadm/463/46302.htm

[1695] Wilson, Sir Richard 'The Civil Service in the New Millennium', 26 March 2002.

For Blair, the special advisers have been crucial in policy coordination. There is a clear communication line between these appointees and the departments.[1697] According to one senior civil servant interviewed by the author, after the minister, "...[t]hey are the second most influential people in the department."[1698] Equally, important in government centralisation was that the number of No. 10 advisers increased from eight to 25 by the end of 1999.[1699]

The role of special advisers is controversial in a number of respects. One, less commented on, has been their function in policing relations between the Labour Party and the government. An indication of this was the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers, drawn up in July 2001. One important aspect of this is that it legitimates publicly-funded special advisers intervening to wrest control of the Labour Party's democratically-decided policies. The code argues thus:

> It would be damaging to the Government's objectives if the Party took a different approach to that of the Government, and the Government therefore needs to liaise with the Party to make sure that Party publicity is factually accurate and consistent with Government policy.[1700]

In other words, it was not only legitimate to use taxpayers money to have advisers working to see that the party's public face was "accurate", as the Government leadership saw it. Advisors could also operate to make sure the party's line was at one with

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[1696] The estimated amount spent on special advisers had doubled to nearly £4million a year, according to official estimates. (Committee on Standards in Public Life. 2000. Sixth Report: Reinforcing Standards. HMSO.: Section 6.8).

[1697] Richards and Smith: 151. See also Morrison: 281-3.

[1698] Personal interview with a senior civil servant, September 13 2002.

[1699] Committee on Standards in Public Life, Sixth Report: Reinforcing Standards, January 2000, HMSO.: Section 6.5-6.7. As the departing cabinet secretary Sir Richard Wilson put it in 2002: "...the role of Number10 and the size of Number10 and the concentration of special advisers in Number10 are different from what they have been before." Select Committee on Public Administration Minutes of Evidence, Question 357, March 14 2002, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmpubadm/303/2031401.htm

[1700] Cabinet Office. 2001. Code of Conduct for Special Advisers, http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/central/2001/codconspads.htm, paragragh 13.

Government. The code saw special advisers as having the legitimate role of providing this "...channel of communication in these areas of overlap...".[1701]

Spin, the press and News Corporation

Another major change was the press and media role for such advisers and the role of the chief 'spinner' Campbell, as part of the renewed bid for Labour representation. Despite a popular misconception, not all advisers are 'spin doctors'. However, after Labour entered government, such was the concentration on press and media management, that more than half of the advisers worked on presentation to the press and media, as at least part of their work.[1702] This was despite the fact that their formal role was to give ministerial advice.[1703] As the retiring cabinet secretary Sir Richard Wilson admitted: "I think the fact is that there are more people than there have been in the past who are there to deal with the press."[1704]

The Labour administration reorganised government and the civil service along the lines that it had reshaped the Labour Party. The operation of what has been called the 'Millbankisation' of government has been chronicled elsewhere in eloquent detail.[1705] This work shall merely attempt to identify a few salient points. There was a centralisation of control around No. 10, as has been mentioned, with a special emphasis on press and news management. Labour instigated a Strategic Communications Unit (SCU).[1706] This had shades of the SCA. Equally, within departments, special advisers have been

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[1701] Cabinet Office. 2001. Code of Conduct for Special Advisers, http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/central/2001/codconspads.htm, paragraph 14. Harold Wilson kept the role of the party separate by having a Parliamentary Liaison Officer, Gerald Kaufman, funded by the party. (Seymour-Ure, Colin. 1996. The British press and broadcasting since 1945. Oxford: Blackwell.: 212).

[1702] Grannatt, Mike, Evidence, Select Committee on Public Administration Minutes of Evidence, February 28 2002, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmpubadm/303/2022801.htm , Sir Richard Wilson, 'The Civil Service in the New Millennium', 26 March 2002. The most notorious example of this was with the political appointee Jo Moore.

[1703] Dr Tony Wright, Select Committee on Public Administration Minutes of Evidence, March 14 2002, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmpubadm/303/2031401.htm

[1704] Sir Richard Wilson, Select Committee on Public Administration Minutes of Evidence, March 14 2002, Question 360, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmpubadm/303/2031401.htm

[1705] Franklin, *Packaging Politics*, 2004: Chapters 3 and 4.

[1706] Ibid.: 60-1.

important in their role in 'spinning'. Departments were now much more conscious of news management.[1707]

A particular feature of Labour's emphasis was, as in opposition, on providing exclusive access to News Corporation's titles. As the senior broadcaster and writer on spin Nicholas Jones told the author, the *Sun*'s exclusive on 2001 election date, the deal made between Downing Street and the News of the World's former editor Phil Hall over Robin Cook's marriage breakdown and the particularly extensive briefing by special advisers in the *Times* were examples of this.[1708]

McNair, in his spirited defence of spin and PR's role in politics, argues that: "...journalists need spin...". They required the spin doctors to fill the increased acres of space in newspapers and other media.[1709] However, this is to ignore the shift in journalistic production. As noted previously, employers had cut journalist numbers, making overworked reporters more susceptible to spin. Journalists may not have wanted it, but factors outside their control made it increasingly difficult to avoid being 'spun'.

McNair is correct that Labour did not pioneer spin in government. Bernard Ingham, for one, was adept at media management and prefigured Campbell in some areas.[1710] However, under Labour there has been crucial differences, as part of a move towards increased Labour representation in the press. As McNair acknowledges, what is different with spin, than merely the accurate supply of information, is the politicisation or partisanship. What is marked is that, rather than supplying politically dispassionate

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[1707] Personal interview with a senior civil servant, September 13 2002.
[1708] "If you look at the *Times* now, you can find out the whole page of the *Times* will have these sources, these stories without a single attribution... Now, on the one hand, Blair and Campbell criticise this, but on the other hand they perpetuate the system." (Jones interview). For details of Campbell's negotiations over Robin Cook and other discussions over *Sun* stories see Jones, Nicholas. 2001. *The control freaks : how new Labour gets its own way*. London: Politico's, 2001.: 200-4. For Labour's links with the *Times* and the *Sun* see Oborne: 174-176.
[1709] McNair, *Journalism and democracy*: 135-6. A similar argument is put by Pippa Norris. (Pippa Norris, 'Political Communications in Post-Industrial Democracies', in Dowding Keith, M., James Hughes, Helen Margetts, and Association Political Studies. 2001. Challenges to democracy : ideas, involvement, and institutions, the PSA yearbook 2000. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave : in association with Political Studies Association.: 100-117: 111).
[1710] *Ibid.*: 128, 133, Williams, *Get me a murder a day!*: 254-5.

information, a spin doctor provides information that puts the Government in the best possible light.[1711] Party campaigning has been transferred to Whitehall with many of the same methods.[1712] As one senior civil servant interviewed by the author in 2002 put it: "I think it is much more politicised than five years ago... I think they have tried to have too much news management and relentless spin and the production of good stories. And I think there is more of a blurring of what civil servants should and shouldn't do."[1713]

In Government, Chief Press Secretary Alastair Campbell became the most important figure in press and media management. Crucially, although McNair indicates that Campbell was merely following in the footsteps of Haine and Ingham, he admits that he was different to Ingham in the important respect that he was not a career civil servant.[1714] While this may indeed make his role more transparent, it is part of a major shift, where a political appointee is in control.[1715]

The important difference from previous administrations was that revised rules on special advisers left him, along with the Chief of Staff Jonathan Powell, with power over career civil servants and the ability to give them orders.[1716] Thus, the Labour leadership's control over the information given out by the 'impartial' civil service was unheralded. The politicisation of information and the ability to spin information increased significantly.

[1711] Seymour-Ure describes Ingham as only formally non-partisan; breaching the "...partisan-non-partisan boundary...". (Seymour-Ure, *Prime ministers*: 145, 148, 166). Yet McNair accepts there was a difference. (McNair, *Journalism and democracy*: 126-7).

[1712] Margaret Scammell, 'New Media, New Politics', in Dunleavy, Patrick. 2002. *Developments in British politics 6*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002.: 169-184, 180.

[1713] Personal interview with a senior civil servant, September 13 2002.

[1714] McNair, *Journalism and democracy*: 133. A similar point is made in Oborne: 150-1.

[1715] *Ibid.*: 133. An example of the political nature of Campbell's contribution was his description of Conservative policies as 'Mickey Mouse'. (Sir Richard Wilson, Select Committee on Public Administration Minutes of Evidence, March 14 2002 http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmpubadm/303/2031401.htm, Sylvester, Rachel. 2002. 'Laying to rest the ghost of Sir Humphrey', Daily Telegraph, July 29 2002). This was followed by a complaint by the Cabinet Secretary Sir Richard Wilson. However, this was the exception rather than the rule. For a discussion on this extra power, within the context on a discussion on the similarities between Campbell and Ingham see Franklin, *Packaging Politics*: 41. See also Chapters 3 and 4).

[1716] Sixth Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, Reinforcing Standards, January 2000, HMSO, Section 6.12.

This is especially important when one considers the extent of Campbell's control over civil service information. He commanded the traditionally impartial Government Information and Communication Service (GICS). He also ran the SCU and from February 2002, the co-ordination of government publicity campaigns of the Central Office of Information, which handles all press and media advertising and marketing campaigns for the Government.[1717] This has prompted one commentator to describe him as "...the government's unacknowledged Minister of Information".[1718] Another aspect of the revised rules has strengthened the special advisors' politicised press management role. It is understood that senior civil servants cannot sack them.[1719]

The motivation of all these changes was that New Labour's policies would be more positively reported in the press and media. This had a fortuitously symbiotic relationship with its press and cross-ownership policies. Information would be politicised – the civil service would be manipulated to provide New Labour's policies in their best light to the press and media. Meanwhile, maybe coincidentally, its media ownership policies were, for the most part, positively received by media businesses. Linton indicates that this would be one way the Labour strategists considered that they could ensure that the newspapers remained receptive to their ideas.[1720]

Latterly there was a transfer of personnel from one field to the other. Bill Bush had been the head of a new version of Milbank's' 'prebuttal' unit, anticipating press reaction in

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[1717] This point is also made in Franklin, *Packaging Politics*, 2004: esp. 78. For further discussion on this aspect of the Labour government's media relations and Campbell's role see Seymour-Ure, *Prime ministers*: 20, 135-6, 154.

[1718] Professor Stuart Weir, Democratic Audit, 'Memorandum', submitted to the Select Committee on Public Administration, February 28 2002, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmpubadm/303/2022801.htm. Although, he delegated lobby briefing to his deputy Godric Smith and former Northern Ireland information officer Tom Kelly in June 2000. (Franklin, *Packaging Politics*, 2004: 50).

[1719] Sir Richard Wilson, Select Committee on Public Administration Minutes of Evidence, March 14 2002.

[1720] Linton interview.

preparing government responses.[1721] He then became a special advisor to the DCMS, prior to the drawing up of the Communications Bill.[1722]

The representational strategy starts to unravel?

However, opposition to Labour's press policy was to come from another source. We have seen that the Labour leadership believed that this strategy would be more effective in getting Labour support, as for a time it was. The 2001 election, for instance, saw all News Corporation titles come out for Labour. As we have seen, importantly, in the Labour Party, the unions and the members, who understood its worth in electoral support, did not openly challenge this strategy. However, aspects of Labour's representational focus started to be questioned.

McNair denounces the 'demonisation' of spin, which he sees in a positive light. He argues that New Labour spin doctors, rather than being all-powerful, have become more transparent, by their own volition. He also indicates that they have been subject to press deconstruction.[1723] However, this has happened under pressure from a journalist minority who have become weary of the news' conscious manipulation, which had become Labour's stock-in-trade. Contrary to McNair's rosy interpretation, these were not indications of spin playing a positive role. These were pointers that Labour's strategy was encountering serious difficulties.

The story of the latter stages of Blair's first term and the second term's start was that, rather than the news being spun, the spinning was the news. This undermined Labour's presentation. Central to creating this view was the news coverage by journalists who

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[1721] Scammell, New Media: 182.
[1722] He had learnt his old tricks well however. Acting as Tessa Jowell's special adviser, he told Nicholas Jones that when the Bill would be announced "....there will be no story in the newspapers as we have got Puttnam on board". (Information from Nicholas Jones, November 25 2002). This worked. So, when it was unveiled, newspapers reported that Puttnam had had his concerns answered. (Gibson, Owen. 2002. 'Let the fun begin', *The Guardian*, November 20, 2002 , Leader 'New model media', *The Guardian*, November 21, 2002). However, this was not true. Puttnam was still opposed to significant parts of the Bill at this stage.
[1723] McNair, *Journalism and democracy*: 132-5.

resented the Labour government's carrot and stick approach to journalists, in order to get better representation in the press – with more nasty stick than carrot.[1724]

The carrot took the form of newspapers, particularly the *Sun* being given preferential treatment over stories, as has been mentioned. For instance, the *Sun* was first made aware of the 2001 general election date.[1725] Even those who were subject to the carrot approach became more resentful of their own newspaper groups' quiescence in the news management techniques. One *Sun* journalist told the author of his colleagues' fear that New Labour's influence had deflected the *Sun*'s traditional news values, for instance in reporting the Blair family.[1726] A more senior figure in News Corporation, Sky News political editor Adam Boulton, also indicated his concern in 1998: "On a bad day I feel soiled, when we end up seeing the press conniving in our own manipulation."[1727] And there was still the tension in News Corporation titles over the euro.[1728]

The stick attracted hostility from two sides. Questioning journalists were ostracised and believed that government special advisers were trying to get their colleagues dismissed if they did not submit to the bullying and toe the line. Even editors were believed by other journalists to be targeted by this process. Andrew Marr, a New Labour sympathiser, was, nonetheless, said to have lost his job at the helm of the *Independent* after an intervention by Campbell, just before the 1997 election, after criticising Blair's nationalism.[1729] Among those journalists who put their heads above the parapet to chronicle this process were the senior broadcaster Nicholas Jones and the *Observer* correspondent Nick

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[1724] Franklin, Hand of History:135-7, Franklin, *Packaging Politics*, 2004: 63.
[1725] Jones interview.
[1726] *Sun* journalists widely believed that their editor, David Yelland, had originally sat on the story that Blair's son Euan had been involved in a drunken escapade, despite having the story confirmed, because of his closeness to No.10. In a sense, whether this was true, or was because of an intervention higher up in News Corporation, or was due to an inability to confirm the story was less important. The perception was that the editor had "bottled it" in the face of No.10. (Personal information) Peter Oborne and Simon Walters also chronicle Yelland's "...almost star-struck admiration of Blair...". (Oborne, Peter and Simon Walters. 2004. *Alastair Campbell*, London: Arum).
[1727] Kevin Toolis, 'The Enforcer', *The Guardian*, April 4 1998. Also mentioned in Franklin, *Packaging Politics*, 2004: 65. He was even more forthright in 2002, writing that: "Top figures in New Labour increasingly regard journalists as "scum"...". (Boulton, Adam. 2002. 'Lobby out of the loop', www.ePolitix.com, October 15 2002).
[1728] See Oborne: 175.
[1729] Cohen, *Cruel Britannia*: 153-4, Oborne: 182-3.

Cohen.[1730] The latter described the journalists' revolt was such that under New Labour: "...the label 'control freak' ... had been turned ... from an insult from the hippy fringe to the platitude of choice for mainstream pundits".[1731]

As importantly, newspaper rivals and broadcasters picked up on this spin story, notably those angry at being excluded from Campbell's carrot strategy, particularly the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Telegraph* to the right and *The Mirror* to the left.[1732] Thus, both spin and, particularly, the strategy of targeting News Corporation's titles had its problems. Former *Daily Mirror* editor Greenslade, said to be close to Campbell, also recognised this phenomenon, viewing that press concerns about Labour spin had "...turned Labour's great plus into a minus".[1733] As the seasoned commentator Jones put it to the author, speaking in the summer of 2002: "Certainly they have fallen out with the papers at a quicker pace than I would have thought was possible. The newspaper proprietors remained loyal to Thatcher and Major in a way that has not happened with Blair to the same degree... The Government is worried about, for example, the destabilisation of

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[1730] Jones, Nicholas. 2000. *Sultans of spin : the media and the new Labour government.* London: Orion, 2000., Jones, Nicholas. 2001. *The control freaks : how new Labour gets its own way.* London: Politico's, 2001. Cohen says he knew several journalists who New Labour tried to get fired. "Editors are gently told that X and Y get it wrong constantly and 'no one takes them seriously'." (Cohen, *Cruel Britannia*: 146-7, 156)

[1731] Cohen, *Cruel Britannia*: 157.

[1732] Nicholas Jones told the author: "There was a genuine grievance on the part of the *Mail* and the *Telegraph* and those other papers. They believe they are promised access and then it is suddenly withdrawn and it is given to the *Times* or whatever it might be.... My brother George is on the *Telegraph*, I am not in any way speaking for him, but I know the people on the *Telegraph* and the *Mail*, and they see these stories as a marvellous way of getting at the Government.... I am afraid there is a little bit of an agenda setting feeling there ... and they see Campbell and spin as one of the useful ways to get at Blair.... There is a genuine grievance there with the broadcasters too because...think of our point of view. One of the reasons why you see programmes like the World at One, which really go for this, is because we you see we are in the position where we have to take these stories from the national newspapers. We have to follow the national newspaper agenda. Nobody will tell anything to us, and then we will see it in the newspaper, with all of these unattributed quotes. Perhaps there might be an interview, perhaps there might be a signed article by a minister, so that we know that we too are having to follow the agenda. We too are being used, and that again has led to this sort of backlash." (Nicholas Jones interview). See also Roy Greenslade, 'True Colours', The Guardian, May 8 2000. Oborne and Walters chronicle how the *Sun* was later feted with exclusives to the detriment of its tabloid rival the *Daily Mirror*, which despite its increased hostility carried on grudgingly supporting Labour electorally. (Oborne and Walters: esp. 191-5). For a claim about the reason for the Mirror's disillusionment, which involved Clinton and the peace process, see Oborne: 176-7 and Oborne and Walters: 192-3. Campbell later admitted that personal animosity between himself and the lobby was one of the reasons he decided to withdraw from regular briefing in 2001. (quoted in Seymour-Ure, *Prime ministers*: 140, 147).

[1733] Greenslade, True Colours

someone like John Prescott. My own interpretation of the scene at the moment is that it is more fractious than it was at the same point under the Thatcher regime."[1734]

[1734] (Nicholas Jones interview).

Initiatives, initiatives, initiatives

One aspect of spin, which was eventually damaging to New Labour, was its recurrent announcements of initiatives and of new money that had been already promised. Labour's senior communications staff considered that ideas would only impinge on the public's consciousness if they were repeated constantly through the press and media. This was also a response to the heightened demands of expectant people, who believed Labour would deliver on health and education, despite the tight spending limits the new right leadership had imposed in Labour's first term. However, this ploy started to backfire as some parts of the press and media began to get wise to it. Some press and broadcasters started uncovering examples of spun initiatives and figures.

On health, for example, it was uncovered that Labour figures were subject to triple counting and that initiatives had been announced up to four separate times. Money said to be allocated was never spent and claims on spending were misleading. New Labour claims that an extra £21 billion would be invested in the NHS in three years, announced in its first Comprehensive Spending Review, were based on triple accounting. Figures were counted for more than one year. The amount to be invested was, in fact, £10.3 billion – by no means inconsiderable, but less than half the headline figure. According to the chief economist of the independent health think tank, the King's Fund, if such accounting were used to consider all the increases in spending since the NHS was founded in 1948, then more than 80% of the nation's GDP would be spent on health.

On four separate occasions the Government had both announced that £30 million would be spent on refurbishing accident and emergency units and that a time-saving £20 million instant hospital booking system would be installed. Three times it was stated that lottery money would help pay for radiotherapy equipment. Claims were made about recruiting extra doctors, which were to be trained anyway and an announcement made in February 2000 of £400 million of additional funds, was merely repeating an allocation made two year's previously.[1735] A sizeable proportion of the much-trumpeted capital spending

[1735] Panorama. 2000. 'Spin Doctors', BBC 1, March 13 2000.

never materialised as these were based on PFI schemes delayed by the lack of private funding.[1736] Blair's announced target to match the European Union average on health was misleading. It became clear Blair merely meant matching an average taken of all EU states, rather than the weighted average, taking into account the huge differences in population between different states. The difference would be more than 1% of GDP – billions of pounds.[1737] Labour claims in 2001 that it would have saved £1 billion on NHS bureaucracy by 2002 were again based on multiple accounting. Without this, the figure it claimed to have saved would be £264 million. And even this was calculated on figures that had been revised to exclude some managers – whose numbers, Department of Health figures showed, were rising.[1738]

This was also the case in other key areas for New Labour. On education, transport and in the tackling of poverty there was also triple accounting and misleading claims. It was reported that Blair in 1998 had triple-counted increased education spending to make planned investment look like £19 billion. The figure, without this accounting sleight, was said to be closer to £10 million.[1739] On transport, similarly to health, it was found that the much-promoted £180 billion 10-year plan would only set to provide £110 billion, because of a shortfall of private cash.[1740] Gordon Brown had claimed during the 2001 general election that Labour had raised 1.2 million children out of poverty. But it was reported that household income figures released in April 2002 indicated that the figure was closer to half a million – below Labour's original target figure of 700,000.[1741]

There was also a significant amount of spinning when it came to New Labour claims of success in achieving the five much-lauded keynote pledges made in the 1997 election. New Labour pitched these as important markers by which the incoming government was to be judged at its administration's end. Yet, on these, the press and broadcasters exposed

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[1736] Halligan, Liam. 2001. 'Fact and fiction of Labour's performance', *Daily Telegraph*, June 3 2001.
[1737] Grice, Andrew. 2001. 'Health spending must rise by £45bn to hit target, think-tank tells Blair', *Independent*, December 10 2001.
[1738] Panorama. 2001. 'The Labour Years', BBC 1, June 3 2001.
[1739] Panorama. 2001. 'The Labour Years', BBC 1, June 3 2001.
[1740] Halligan, Liam. 2001. 'Fact and fiction of Labour's performance', *Daily Telegraph*, June 3 2001.
[1741] BBC News. 2002. 'Labour 'struggles to beat child poverty'', April 11 2002, bbc.co.uk, George Jones, 'Blair sets out mission to end child poverty within a generation', *Daily Telegraph*, March 19 1999.

the spin cloaking the failure to unambiguously achieve more than two of these. Behind this, was an attempt to mask the low levels of spending on health and education. The Government's own figures had indicated that expenditure on health in Labour's first four years was less as a percentage of GDP than under the last Conservative administration. Education fared worse. It had fallen from 5% of GDP to 4.6%.[1742]

The health pledge was that the Government would cut hospital waiting lists by 100,000. However, the press and broadcast media identified problems with the claim made at the 2001 election that this target had been achieved. The difficulty was that this pledge was said to only apply to inpatients. However, it was noted that this was achieved at the expense of those waiting for a hospital appointment, figures for which were rapidly increasing.[1743] Also, some patients were said to have been reclassified, to massage the figures. Newspaper reports detailed the pressure on NHS managers regarding this spinning. It was reported that nearly one in four hospital chief executives had admitted to the National Audit Office changing treatment definitions, which mostly shortened their waiting lists. Investigations had discovered that thousands had 'disappeared' from waiting lists. [1744]

On education, the pledge to cut school class sizes for five, six and seven-year-olds to 30 and under was simply not achieved.[1745] However, the Government emphasised that infant class sizes had fallen. Yet, against this spin, it was reported that this was leading to larger classes for older children and that the class reduction was because pupil numbers were falling.[1746] When the Labour government trumpeted figures just before the 2001 election indicating that the pupil-teacher ratio in secondary schools had fallen for the first time in

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[1742] Denny, Charlotte and Larry Elliott. 2001. 'Labour fails to match Tory era spending', *The Guardian*, March 21, 2001.

[1743] Panorama. 2000. 'Spin Doctors', BBC 1, March 13 2000, Panorama. 2001. 'The Labour Years', BBC 1, June 3 2001.

[1744] Hall, Celia. 2001. 'Hospitals 'move the waiting list goalposts'' *Daily Telegraph*, June 5 2001, Martin, Nicole. 2001. 'Where patients vanished from the queues', *Daily Telegraph*, June 5 2001.

[1745] Grice, Andrew. 2001. 'Ministers admit key pledges will not be met', *Independent*, January 11 2001, Grice, Andrew. 2001. 'The Labour Party', *Independent*, April 12 2001, Curtice, John. 2001. 'Public's doubts grow over Labour record', *Daily Telegraph*, January 14 2001.

[1746] Russell, Ben. 2000. 'Heads warn of backlash over rising class sizes', *Independent*, April 10 2000, Panorama. 2001. 'The Labour Years', BBC 1, June 3 2001.

a decade, its spin triumph was short-lived. Within a day, it was recognised that this was not the whole picture. It was reported that the ratio was still higher than when Labour came into office.[1747]

On law and order, the pledge was to halve the time it took for young offenders to be processed through the judicial system. The Government also failed on this.[1748] At first Government spin doctors claimed that this target would be achieved "...some time in 2001".[1749] Then newspapers were told that the pledge on this and education were for a full five-year term, rather than by the date the election was called.[1750]

This was part of a broader trend. Government officials informed journalists who were traditionally more sympathetic to the Labour leadership that many of the dozens of formal targets it had set were now 'moving targets'. So, treasury officials announced that the some goals set in 1998 had been superseded by new 2000 targets, which would last to 2004.[1751] A print journalist noted another ploy. A failed pledge from the 1997 election – to raise the share of national income spent on education – was repackaged by Blair as a target for the second term.[1752]

If such tactics were creating a backlash against New Labour among journalists, the unveiling of such spun figures was leading the electorate to see through them as well. The Jo Moore case was emblematic in this regard. In both constituencies, as the Labour

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[1747] Duke, Elizabeth. 2001. 'Government gets election boost as class sizes fall', *Independent*, April 6 2001, Cassidy, Sarah. 2001. 'Fall in class sizes fails to overturn four-year increase', *Independent*, April 7 2001.
[1748] Verkaik, Robert. 2001. 'How Straw's pledge on youth crime crumbled', *Independent*, January 5 2001, Grice, Andrew. 2001. 'Ministers admit key pledges will not be met', *Independent*, January 11 2001, Grice, Andrew. 2001. 'The Labour Party', *Independent*, April 12 2001, Curtice, John. 2001. 'Public's doubts grow over Labour record', *Daily Telegraph*, January 14 2001.
[1749] Verkaik, Robert. 2000. 'Labour may fail to meet target on young offenders', *Independent*, April 29 2000.
[1750] Grice, Andrew. 2001. 'Ministers admit key pledges will not be met', *Independent*, January 11 2001, Schaefer, Sarah. 2001. 'Labour under fresh pressure over its pledge on crime', *Independent*, January 13 2001.
[1751] Russell, Ben and Andrew Grice, 2002. 'Ministers are judged and cursed by targets', *Independent*, January 14 2002.
[1752] Leader. 2001. 'Such brilliance in the art of politics has one defect: it insults our intelligence' *Independent*, April 14 2001.

loyalist Tony Wright put it: "...just as the last Government had the word "sleaze" attached to it, this Government has got the word 'spin' attached...".[1753]

Polls started to indicate that the public considered Blair as more interested in spin than substance. It can be argued that this accusation, was in a sense, inaccurate because the New Labour government had been prepared to court unpopularity to achieve its wider goals. Nevertheless, concerns that "...the problem with such brilliance at the art of politics is that it insults the intelligence of the voters" seemed to be borne out by one electors' poll.[1754] A study by John Curtice concluded that, although voters still would vote Labour, they were not convinced that Labour had met more than one of its five keynote pledges – that of not raising income tax. More believed waiting time delays had increased than either they had stayed the same or been reduced.[1755] In other words, the spin wasn't working.

Another poll conducted in 2000 revealed that a strong majority saw Blair as more concerned with image than issues.[1756] Pollsters were seeing spin as 'counterproductive'.[1757] Hostility to spin was also blamed for a dramatic turnaround in how honest and trustworthy the Labour government was seen by people polled. In 1988, a clear majority saw Labour as honest. By 2002, the figure had halved, while nearly two-thirds regarded the Government as lacking in trust. Two-thirds also viewed Alastair Campbell as dishonest – this was a higher percentage than his leader. Yet, a majority also believed Blair to be dishonest to some degree.[1758]

It is certainly the case that New Labour government was not the first British administration accused of 'fiddling the figures'. But the repetition of announcements was

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[1753] Tony Wright, Liaison Select Committee, July 16 2002.
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmliaisn/1065/106501.htm
[1754] Leader. 2001. 'Such brilliance in the art of politics has one defect: it insults our intelligence' *Independent*, April 14 2001.
[1755] Curtice, John. 2001. 'Public's doubts grow over Labour record', *Daily Telegraph*, January 14 2001.
[1756] 60% of those in a national poll in 2000 viewed that Tony Blair was "...more concerned with image than with dealing with the real issues.". (MORI poll, July 23 2000, conducted for the *Mail on Sunday*. Mori.com).
[1757] MORI, The Bubble Bursts, June 2000, www.mori.com
[1758] King, Anthony. 2002. 'Labour viewed as 'sleazy and disreputable', *Daily Telegraph*, June 20 2002.

something it became known by. This undermined Labour's claims to have put 'clear blue water' between itself and the Conservatives by its spending priorities in its first term. It could also add to the scepticism when new money was announced, as happened in the second year of Labour's second term. The boy could only cry wolf so often. As a senior civil servant told the author:

> The public had become saturated with it...The idea was that figures sounded much better than percentages. For instance, with NHS funding there would be 5% growth, which, after inflation, would be 2% more. It sounds much better to say that there would be a £20 billion increase over three years. But it started to rebound on them.[1759]

This 'spin difficulty' was implicitly recognised by Blair. He defended the Government's behaviour to the Liaison Select Committee in July 2002, in an implicit *mea culpa*:

> When you are in Opposition for 18 years...there was a tendency...that you believe the announcement is the reality. In many ways in Opposition it is, because what matters is the policy you are announcing; you are not actually in a position to deliver anything on the ground. I think for the first period of time in Government there was a tendency to believe, as it were, that the same situation still applied. It does not, in fact. For Government the announcement is merely the intention; the reality is what you have to go on and deliver on the ground.[1760]

However, this disavowal may have sounded hollow to a public who had before heard the Labour government distancing itself from spin and saw the claim undermined by Jo

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[1759] Personal interview with a senior civil servant, September 13 2002. Granville Williams put it to the author that: "...in the end, people have not been given what you would term 'straight bat, straight reporting'...People will say 'this really does stink, what has been done here with figures on health, and money for the hospitals etc'. But it also works in silly little ways...this...fiasco...about Blair wanting to have a prominent role at the [Queen Mother's] funeral...It demeans what seemed to be a quite credible strategy." (Granville Williams interview).

[1760] Tony Blair, Liaison Select Committee, July 16 2002.
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmliaisn/1065/106501.htm

Moore's infamous email. At the end of 2002, it was not clear whether Labour's representational strategy had been permanently harmed.

Appendix 2 to Chapter 7: The Right of Reply

The last statutory attempt to provide a right of reply came with the Labour MP Clive Solely's Freedom and Responsibility of the Press Private Members' Bill. Consistent with her earlier position, on this occasion it was supported by the then Labour frontbench media spokeswoman, Clwyd.[1761]

Published in June 1982, it was more tightly drawn on the right of reply than the some of the earlier Bills.[1762] It concentrated on accuracy rather than bias and ignored libel. In other ways, it was more far reaching. It was similar to previous attempts to provide a statutory right of redress. However, it sought to link this with a call for press freedom. It provided for an Independent Press Authority (IPA), which would monitor press freedom and report to parliament on any new means to advance this.[1763] The new authority would investigate questions such as ownership and control of the media, which the Press Council had been charged with, but earlier critics had judged that it had ignored.[1764]

The conception of this new authority was in both the social democratic and radical alternative traditions. It would be nominally independent and representative. The minister involved would seek nominations from "...bodies which appear to him to be interested..." and it would be demographically representative of the British population regarding gender, race, sexuality, disability and region.[1765] However, it followed the social democratic tradition in its attachment to the state. A minister would appoint the authority. It would not be elected.

Solely took the unusual step for a Private Members Bill of setting up a series of cross-party hearings to consider the Bill and voluntary regulation's effectiveness. The hearings

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[1761] Dawnay, Ivo. 1993. 'Pressure grows for press laws', *Financial Times*, January 12 1993.
[1762] Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, 'Statement of Evidence, December 15 1992', in Mike Jempson, ed. 1993. *Special Parliamentary Hearings on Freedom and Responsibility of the Press*. London: Crantock Communications.: 144.
[1763] *Ibid.*: 99.
[1764] O'Malley and Soley: 95, 105, 117.
[1765] Jempson: 101.

again attracted the press editors' irritation. It was particularly pointed out, borrowing from a classical liberal model, that a state-appointed body could not advance press freedom. This argument was based on an implicitly narrowly-defined definition press freedom as the freedom of editors and proprietors, in part against an overbearing state.[1766]

Yet, more powerfully, an independent journalists' group, which included both former MP and media activist Phillip Whitehead and prominent investigative journalists, attacked it. Following a similar argument to that pursued when we first addressed the legal right of reply two chapters ago, the journalists considered the authority threatened becoming a "...government appointed quango...". They saw that it could be used by a Maxwell-style figure to "...tie up journalists in costly, time-consuming litigation...".[1767] O'Malley and Solely note the journalists' objections but argue that the fact that a law could be abused is not enough reason for excluding it. It would need to be properly framed.[1768] The concern in this would be for a broader franchise to be involved in this decision-making than a court or state-appointed body. At the very least, working journalists should be strongly represented on such a body if the concerns of investigative reporters were to be allayed.

Without a broad challenge to the wider assumptions about press ownership and an attempt to broaden out the democratic representativeness of the IPA, the Bill's advocates could not entirely refute the editors' criticisms. Equally, the journalists' critique pointed to the wider power relations in society, which were not focussed on in solely attempting to redress inequalities in press reporting.

This was the last attempt to introduce a right of reply. As already implied, the 1997 manifesto did not include the demand, although it was still Labour Party policy.

[1766] As the editor of *The Observer*, Donald Trelford, put it: "I object to the very idea that 21 people set up by a government will overrule the judgement of an editor as to what he is to publish in his newspaper. I think that that in itself is a breach of freedom of the press." ('Evidence of Mr Donald Trelford, editor, *The Observer*,' in Jempson: 89).
[1767] The Cross-Media Group, 'Statement of Evidence', in Jempson: 66, 70.
[1768] O'Malley and Soley: 180-1.

Appendix 3 to Chapter 7: The curious cases of Lord Hollick and Richard Desmond

The media focus on New Labour and the *Express* group has been most noticeably on how the pornographer Richard Desmond bought the *Express* titles, hired the former Labour Party general secretary and gave a substantial donation to the party. Curran and Seaton focus on Desmond as the *Express* group's architect of a New Labour newspaper realignment.[1769]

However, another press and media figure perhaps had a more interesting and pivotal role in the realignment of the *Express* titles. Interestingly, his tale indicates that one of New Labour's coterie had considered new ways of tackling the press ownership question. Rather than strengthening ownership rules as the way to provide greater representation, one figure close to New Labour branched out into owning national titles and, in a personally failed venture, provided greater Labour representation for the period we are considering. The tale of Lord Hollick and the Express newspaper group indicated the interest of those around New Labour in representation and provided a potential challenge to the traditional bipolarisation problem. Greenslade saw Hollick's involvement as more by accident than design.[1770] Yet, insiders have indicated that for a time, at least, it was part of a definite strategy to advance Labour in the press.

As we noted in the last chapter, Lord Hollick was a central figure in the 1992 election campaign, in a way that is not always appreciated.[1771] He had previously advised Kinnock and had founded the IPPR, of which he was a trustee. He was also a key Clintonisation advocate, which was broadly rejected by Smith.[1772]

[1769] Curran and Seaton, 2003: 75-6.
[1770] Greenslade, True Colours.
[1771] Seymour-Ure, for instance, rather underplays his political connections and influence. (Seymour-Ure, *Prime ministers*: 118.
[1772] Gould, *The unfinished revolution*: 177.

Importantly, when Labour came to office this influential media figure became a key media business influence on policy after joining the Government. He became a special advisor at the DTI, advising it on the key area of competition law and regulation, alongside a policy task force headed by Lord Haskins. This gave Hollick what was described at the time as an "...unrivalled hearing at the centre of Government."[1773]

As if this was not enough, he also took a leading role as manager of one of the top four national newspaper groups. Hollick had had his first taste of senior newspaper management when he briefly became a Mirror Group director in the early 1990s.[1774] In February 1996, Hollick's company MAI merged with United News and Media (UNM), the Express newspapers group's owners, headed by the Tory peer Lord Stevens. This left the press group in the strange position of having two politically antagonistic managers. It soon became clear that, under Hollick as chief executive, the *Daily Express*' direction was changing. The media mogul connected to Blair adviser Philip Gould, whose company he had an interest in and whose office was to be in the Express building, was slowly shifting the traditionally Tory loyalist newspaper to the left. Lord Stevens elected to take a backseat role and go part-time later in 1996.[1775]

By the start of the 1997 election, in hardly a ringing endorsement for the party it traditionally supported, the *Daily Express* announced: "In the weeks to come, the Express will make its preference known. But today we are content merely to celebrate the call to democratic action."[1776] By election day, the Express titles still supported the Conservatives, albeit without the brazen confidence of old.[1777] And soon after the

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[1773] Business Comment, 'View looks good from Lord Hollick's chair', *Independent*, September 11 1997. See also Freedman, 2000: 267.
[1774] Routledge, *Mandy*: 142,
[1775] Robinson, Philip. 1996. 'Back-seat role for Lord Stevens', *Daily Telegraph*, November 14 1996, Bennett, Neil. 1999. 'The Odd Couple, *Sunday Telegraph*, November 28 1999. See also Cohen, *Cruel Britannia*: 145-6.
[1776] Quoted in Hughes-Onslow, James. 1998. 'Boycott may be too much of a maverick', *Independent*, September 22 1998.
[1777] McKie, Clingers: 127.

election, the editor of the *Daily Express*, Richard Addis, announced that it now approved of the Blair government, which he saw was in a conservative tradition.[1778]

The stage was set for Hollick to introduce Rosie Boycott as the *Daily Express*'s new editor. This signalled an important change in the editorial direction of the daily and Sunday titles – now part of an integrated operation. Recruited personally by Hollick, according to one insider she was recommended for the job by Phillip Gould.[1779] Whatever the truth of this, others testify that Hollick, in this period, saw the Express titles' role was to back New Labour and increase his political influence. As one former reporter told the author: "He definitely bought the paper in order to turn it into a New Labour paper. Hollick got the newspaper because he thought there would be a payback in terms of honours and recognition."[1780] Boycott's former deputy noted: "Hollick ... loved owning newspapers. They gave him political and social cachet."[1781]

In the past, Labour had denounced press management's power to influence political debate. Now one of New Labour's own was using press management in order to change the direction of a major newspaper – to influence the political discourse.[1782]

[1778] Interestingly, he wrote: "One of the never-written headlines of the election was 'Vote conservative – vote Blair'. For many people, the words and deeds of this young government are reminders of a longer-lived form of conservatism than that produced by the lightning storms of Margaret Thatcher's 1980s." (Addis, Richard. 1997. 'A red rose blooms in Blackfriars', *Independent*, June 9 1997).

[1779] The insider was former Express journalist James Hughes-Onslow. Although he famously had a grudge against Boycott, the claim has more validity from the fact it is the context of an article arguing that the problem with Boycott was her *distance* from the political influence of the Labour leadership. (Hughes-Onslow, James. 1998. 'Boycott may be too much of a maverick', *The Independent*, September 22 1998). See also Cohen, *Cruel Britannia*: 146 and Gapper, John and Cathy Newman.1998.'Editor moves to Express titles', *Financial Times*, April 22 1998.

[1780] Author interview with a former *Daily Express*, November 12, 2000.

[1781] Blackhurst, Chris. 2001. 'Bad days at Blackfriars', *The Guardian*, January 29, 2001.

[1782] An early indication of the political direction the paper was now going to take was that Boycott originally wanted to employ a Blair critic and Brown supporter and biographer Paul Routledge as political correspondent. Whatever the circumstances, which have been the subject of speculation, the offer was withdrawn and Anthony Bevins, a favourite of Alastair Campbell, was offered the post. (Baldwin, Tom. 1998. ' No 10 accused of blocking Express job for journalist', *Daily Telegraph*, May 10 1998, Cole, Peter. 1998. 'A labour of love at the new Express', *Independent*, July 7 1998). Although Number 10 denied involvement at the time, Campbell subsequently admitted that he had been asked "...who I rated..." and he identified Bevins. (Interview with Hagerty, Bill. 2000. 'Cap'n spin does lose his rag!', *British Journalism Review*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2000). The paper also employed the New Labour associate Derek Draper as a columnist, who said that he let Mandelson vet his writing. The paper then sponsored the Labour Party's information packs and had a stand for the first time at the 1998 Labour Party conference. (Viner, Katherine. 1998. 'Window dressing', *The Guardian*, October 5 1998). A further consolidation of New Labour

Importantly, there was also perceived to be a business and advertiser motivation for this move towards New Labour. On acquiring the Express papers, Greenslade quotes Hollick as suggesting that it would not make commercial sense for them to become Labour titles.[1783] Yet, the mandate given to Boycott and her deputy Chris Blackhurst was for the papers to go "...upmarket, to make them appeal to a younger, progressive audience".[1784] This linked with making the paper appeal to a New Labour readership. If we remember, the problem of Labour readers in the past was that they were unattractive to advertisers because they were, simplistically put, poorer and older. Now the demographic position of New Labour readers was said to attract advertisers. It could be now convincingly argued that, at least for the niche market of New Labour's core supporters, the traditional problem of Labour representation no longer existed. The social strata which the other Gould, Bryan, had described as we saw, was attractive to advertisers. There was a business logic in a newspaper that was both aspirational and campaigning. The Express titles were explicitly aimed at readers who mixed neo-liberal market economics with a small dose of "...social justice which provides opportunity".[1785] Those close to Labour's new right deemed a middle market title with a non-traditional Labour readership as a financially attractive proposition.

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influence in the Express titles came when the *Sunday Express* editor left two months after the paper ran a story alluding to Mandelson's sexuality. Again, whatever the truth about Mandelson and the government's influence in the sacking was beside the point. What most actors from different perspectives did not deny was that her views were out of line with the political direction Hollick and Boycott wanted to go. Both sides recognised that the woman who was going to go on to become Hague's press secretary did not approve of the political direction Hollick and his overall editor were taking the Express titles when she left. (Greenslade, Roy. 1999. 'Boycott sacks Platell. But will it save the paper?', *The Guardian*, January 25, 1999, Gapper, John and David Wighton. 1999. 'Sunday Express chiefs quit in Mandelson row', *Financial Times*, January 20 1999, Anon. 1999. 'Protest motion on press 'sackings'', *Independent*, January 21 1999). Examples of the political direction the paper took with Hollick at the helm include over Europe – the major problem New Labour had with News Corporation's tabloids. Under the previous editor Richard Addis, though they were generally loyal to Major, the newspapers backed the Conservative Eurosceptics. In 1998, Hollick left the government to head a pro-Euro campaign Britain in Europe, working again with Phillip Gould. (Culf, Andrew. 1996. ' PM's allies turn nasty over Europe', *The Guardian*, April 24 1996. BBC News Online. 1998. ' Hollick to head euro campaign', BBC News Online, October 9 1998, MacAskill, Euan. 1998. 'Referendum foes await starting gun', *The Guardian*, December 18, 1998). Under Hollick and Boycott, the *Daily Express* took a strongly pro-EU stance.

[1783] Greenslade, *Press Gang*: 634.

[1784] Blackhurst. See also Hagerty, Bill. 1999. 'Citizen Clive. Interview with Lord Hollick', *British Journalism Review*, Volume 10, Number 1, 1999: 19-28.

[1785] Hagerty, Citizen Clive.

However, this was not going to last long. What Paul Foot had earlier suggested – that, if challenged, the media barons could let their power be used against New Labour – was proven, albeit in a curious way. By 2000, the *Daily Express*'s line had abruptly changed again, this time to New Labour's left. As the paper's deputy editor explained later, Hollick was angry the Competition Commission applied existing minimal media ownership rules, which did not affect his press interests, yet left his ambitions to become a major media player in tatters. The commission put conditions on his planned merger of UNM with Carlton Television to become the largest ITV broadcaster, which undermined the financial rationale for merger. Angry with the Government, and with advice suggesting that further spending on his newspapers could not be justified in terms of shareholder profit, Hollick lost interest in the titles.[1786] As one former journalist told the author, he saw that New Labour had not rewarded him for his efforts. As she put it: "I don't think he realised that when Tony Blair came into office that he would have to court the likes of the *Daily Mail*. It was a case of not having to … care about the *Express* because that was already on board. That was something that had been dealt with."[1787] This gave Boycott free rein to attack a government, which she was already to the left of.[1788] It also made Hollick open to offers for the title, which was sold to Desmond in November 2000.

This seemed to pose a dilemma for New Labour. Richard Desmond was the owner of a range of pornographic magazines. They objectified women, angering a sizeable section of the party. This posed a potential clash between New Labour's pro-business and anti-sexist values. It was thought by some to have similarly led to a potential regulatory problem for the Labour government. Labour MPs, including the then Home Affairs Committee chair Robin Corbett and trade and industry committee chair Martin O'Neil called for Desmond's takeover to be referred to the Competition Commission.[1789] The Monopoly and Mergers' Commission in 1990 had stopped David Sullivan, owner of

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[1786] Blackhurst. See also Greenslade, *Press Gang*: 666.
[1787] Author interview with a former *Daily Express* reporter, November 12, 2000.
[1788] Glover, Stephen. 2000. 'It was a dreadful picture; but it spoke for humanity', *Spectator*, October 14 2000. For an indication of Boycott's politics see Hughes-Onslow, James. 1998. 'Boycott may be too much of a maverick', *The Independent*, September 22 1998.
[1789] Maguire, Kevin. 2000. 'Byers urged to block Express buyout', *The Guardian*, December 23 2000.

pornographic magazines and the *Sunday Sport*, from gaining a controlling interest in the Bristol Evening Post newspaper group. This was on the basis that it would be against the public interest, as defined by the 1973 Fair Trading Act. It was believed Sullivan's ownership would "...harm both the accurate presentation of news and the free expression of opinion".[1790]

Yet, the trade and industry secretary Stephen Byers refused to recommend an inquiry on public interest grounds. He could argue that, as Desmond owned no newspapers at the time of the buy-up, the act need not apply.[1791] Nevertheless, he had the option of an inquiry. Further concerns were expressed when it later became clear Desmond had been a sizeable Labour Party donor. Soon after the ruling, Desmond's company donated £100,000.[1792] Under his ownership, the paper predominantly supported New Labour in the period we are considering. For New Labour, media business' support and press representation was once again seen to be the overriding concern.

[1790] The Monopoly and Mergers Commission, *Mr David Sullivan and the Bristol Evening Post PLC: A Report on the Proposed Transfer of a Controlling Interest as defined in section 57(4) of the Fair Trading Act 1973*, MMC, 1990: 1.
[1791] Milmo, Dan. 2002. 'Desmond deal never under threat from competition watchdog', *The Guardian*, May 13, 2002.
[1792] Ahmed, Kamal and Antony Barnett. 2002. 'The deal that put a porn baron in favour with No 10', *The Observer*, May 12, 2002, Hodgson, Jessica. 2002. 'Blair contacted Desmond minutes after Express takeover', *The Guardian* , May 13, 2002.